

ALL THE YEAR ROUND.

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WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED HOUSEHOLD WORDS.

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BLACK SHEEP!

BY THE AUTHOR OF "LAND AT LAST," "KISSING THE ROD," &c. &c.

BOOK III.

CHAPTER XIII. "CRUEL AS THE GRAVE."

"I do not know what he is doing," Harriet had repeated to herself in sore distress; "I do not know what he is doing. I am in the dark, and the tide is rising."

The jealous agony she had suffered at Hom-burg was harder to bear than the uncertainty which had been her lot since her return. The intense passion of jealousy sprang up within her was a revelation to this woman of the violence of her own nature, over which a stern restraint had been kept so long, that quiet and calm had grown habitual to her while nothing troubled or disputed her love; but they deserted her at the first rude touch laid upon the sole treasure, the joy, the punishment, the occupation, mainspring, and meaning of her life. Under all the quiet of her manner, under all the smoothness of her speech, Harriet Routh knew well there was a savage element in the desperation of her love for Routh, since he had committed the crime which sets a man apart from his fellows, marked with the brand of blood. She had loved him in spite of the principles of her education, in defiance of the stings of her conscience, dead now, but which had died hard; but now she loved him in spite of the promptings of her instincts, in spite of the revulsion of her womanly feelings, in defiance of the revolt of her senses and her nerves. The more utterly lost he was, the more she clung to him, not indeed in appearance, for her manner had lost its old softness, and her voice the tone which had been a caress; but in her torn and tortured heart. With desperate and mad obstinacy she loved him, defied fate, and hated the world which had been hard to him, for his sake.

With the first pang of jealousy, awoke the fierceness of this love, awoke the proud and defiant assertion of her love and her ownership in her breast. Never would Harriet have pleaded her true, if perverted, love, her unwavering, if wicked, fidelity, to the man who was drifting away from her; the woman's lost soul was too generous for that; but he was

hers, her own;—purchased;—God, in whom she did not believe, and the devil, whom she did not fear, alone knew at what a price;—and he should not be taken from her by another, by one who had done nothing for him, suffered nothing for him, lost nothing for him. Her combative-ness and her craft had been called into instant action by the first discovery of the unexpected peril in which her sole treasure was placed. She understood her position perfectly. No woman could have known more distinctly than Harriet how complete is the helplessness of a wife when her husband's love is straying from her, beckoned towards another—helplessness which every point of contrast between her and her rival increases. She was quite incapable of the futile strife, the vulgar railing, which are the ordinary weapons of ordinary women in the unequal combat; she would have disdained their employment; but fate had furnished her with weapons of other form and far different effectiveness, and these she would use. Routh had strong common sense, intense selfishness, and shrewd judgment. An appeal to these, she thought, could not fail. Nevertheless, they had failed, and Harriet was bewildered by their failure. When she made her first appeal to Routh, she was wholly unprepared for his refusal. The danger was so tremendous, the unforeseen discovery of the murdered man's identity had introduced into their position a complication so momentous, so insurmountable, that she had never dreamed for a moment of Routh's being insensible to its weight and emergency. But he rejected her appeal—rudely, brutally almost, and her astonishment was hardly inferior to her anguish. He must indeed be infatuated by this strange and beautiful woman (Harriet fully admitted the American's beauty—there was an element of candour and judgment in her which made the littleness of depreciating a rival impossible) when he could overlook or under-estimate the importance, the danger, of this newly arisen complication.

This was a new phase in her husband's character; this was an aspect under which she had never seen him, and she was bewildered by it, for a little. It had occurred to her, once, on the day when she last saw George Dallas—parting with him at the gate of his mother's house—to think whether, had she had any other resource but her husband, had the whole world outside of him not been a

dead blank to her, she could have let him go? She had heard of such things; she knew they happened; she knew that many women in "the world" took their husbands' infidelity quietly, if not kindly, and let them go, turning them to the resources of wealth and pleasure. She had no such resources, nor could these have appeared her for a moment, if she had had. She cared nothing for liberty, she who had worn the chain of the most abject slavery, that of engrossing passionate love for an unworthy object, willingly, had hugged it to her bosom, had allowed it without an effort to alleviate the pain, to eat into her flesh, and fill it with corruption. But, more than this, she could not let him go, for his own sake; she was true to the law of her life, that "honour rooted in dishonour" knew no tarnishing from her; she must save him, for his own sake—from himself, she must save him, though not to bring him back to her—must save him, in spite of himself, though she longed, in the cruel pangs of her woman's anguish, to have done with it—to have found that nothingness in which she had come to believe as the "end all," and had learned to look to as her sovereign good.

She had reached such a conclusion, in her meditations, on the night of the great storm at Homburg; she had determined on a course to be adopted, for Routh's sake. She would discard fear, and show him that he must relinquish the desperate game he was playing. She would prove to him that fate had been too strong for him; that in Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge the fatality which was destined to destroy him existed; that her acquaintance with Arthur Felton, and her knowledge of Arthur Felton's affairs, into whose extent Routh had no possible pretext for inquiry, must necessarily establish the missing link. She would hide from him her own sufferings; she would keep down her jealousy and her love; she would appeal to him for himself; she would plead with him only his own danger, only the tremendous risk he was involving himself in. Then she *must* succeed; then the double agony of jealousy of him and fear for him in which she now lived must subside, the burning torment must be stilled. The time might perhaps come in which she should so far conquer self as to be thankful that such suffering had brought about his safety, for there could be no real security for them in London, the terrible fact of Deane's identity with Arthur Felton once known. After that discovery, no arguments could avail with George; the strength of all those which she had used would become potent against her, their weight would be against her—that weight which she had so skilfully adjusted in the balance. After all, she thought that night, as she sat in the darkness and idly watched the lightning, hearing the raging wind unmoved, what would a little more misery matter to her? Little, indeed, if it brought him safety; and it should, it must!

From this condition of mind she had been roused by Routh's startling announcement of their departure on the morrow. The effect

produced upon Harriet was strange. She did not believe that Routh had been only to the gaming-rooms that night; she felt an immutable conviction that he had seen Mrs. Bembridge, and she instantly concluded that he had received a rebuff from the beautiful American. Inexpressibly relieved,—though not blind enough to be in the least insensible to the infamy of her husband's faithlessness, and quite aware that she had more, rather than less, to complain of than she had previously believed;—for she rightly judged, this woman is too finished a coquette to throw up her game a moment before her own interest and safety absolutely obliged her to do so—she acquiesced immediately.

Had Stewart Routh had the least suspicion of the extent of his wife's knowledge of his life at Homburg, he could not have been lulled into the false security in which he indulged on his return to London. He perceived, indeed, that Harriet closely noted the state of his spirits, and silently observed his actions. But he was used to that. Harriet had no one to think of but him, had nothing to care about but him; and she had always watched him. Pleasantly, gaily, before;—coldly, grimly, now; but it was all the same thing. He was quite right in believing she had not the least suspicion that Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge was in London, but that was the sole point on which he was correct. Had he known how much his wife knew, he would have affected a dejection of spirits he was far from feeling, and would have disarmed her by greater attention to her during the few hours of each day which he passed at home.

Harriet was at a loss to account for his cheerfulness; but, strong of mind and heart as she was, she was not altogether free from the weakness of catching at that interpretation of a mystery in which there was some relief for her own pain. So she concluded that he had been only passingly, and not deeply, hurt by the coquetry of the woman who had attracted him, and that he had recovered from the superficial wound, as soon as he became again immersed in the schemes which had awaited him in London.

He had told her little concerning these schemes, but she considered this reticence due to her own withdrawal from her former active participation in the business of his life, and it was an additional inducement to her to hope that Routh was taking the resolution which she desired. "When we get back to London, I will think about it," he had said, and she clung to the hope, to the half promise in the words. He was surely settling affairs so as to enable him to avoid the bursting of the storm. The tacit estrangement between them would account of his doing this silently; his vile temper, which Harriet thoroughly understood, and never failed to recognise in action, would account for his denying her the relief of knowing his intentions. Many small things in his daily life, which did not escape the quickened perception of his wife, betokened a state of preparation for some decided course of action. The time of explanation must

necessarily come; meanwhile, she watched, and waited, and suffered.

How she suffered in every hour of her life! Yet there was a kind of dulness over Harriet, too. She recurred little to the past in point of feeling; she thought over it, indeed, in aid of the action of her reason and her will, but she did not recal it with the keenness either of acute grief for its vanished happiness, such as it had been, or of remorse and terror for its deep and desperate guilt. The burthen of the day was enough now for this woman, whose strength had lasted so long, endured so much, and given way so suddenly.

But time was marching on. The inevitable end drawing near, and Harriet had been utterly unprepared for the second shock, the second unexpected event which had befallen. She had opened George Dallas's letter with the Paris postmark almost without an apprehension. The time for the thing she feared had not yet come; and here was a thing she had never feared, a possibility which had never presented itself to her imagination, brought at once fully before her. She had done this thing. One moment's want of caution, in the midst of a scene in which her nerves had been strung to their highest tension, and this had been the result. Had no other clue existed, these few lines of writing would furnish one leading unerringly to discovery. Supposing no other clue to exist, and Routh to pretend to inability to identify the writing, there were several common acquaintances of Dallas and Deane who *could* identify it, and render a refusal the most dangerous step which Routh could take.

She sat for several minutes perfectly still, her face colourless as marble, and her blue eyes fixed with a painful expression of terror, under the shock of this new discovery. She had had no worse apprehension than that the letter would announce the day of George's intended return, and for that she was prepared; but this! It was too much for her, and the first words she uttered showed that her mind had lost its strict faculty of reasoning: they broke from her with a groan:

"I—I it is who have destroyed him!"

But, even now, weakness and exaggeration had no long duration in Harriet Routh's mind. By degrees she saw this in its true light, an alarming, a terrible coincidence indeed, an addition to the danger of their position, but not necessarily a fatal catastrophe. Then she saw new light, she caught at a new idea, a fresh, bright hope. This would avail with Routh; this would drive away his irresolution; this would really inspire him with the true conviction of their danger; this, which would throw the whole burthen of identification upon him; this, which would establish a strong and intimate link between him and the dead man; for the "articles to be purchased" named in the memorandum of which George had sent her a copy were simply shares in companies, with every one of which Stewart Routh was connected. Only George's ignorance of such

matters had prevented his recognising the meaning of the memorandum.

And now Harriet rose; and as she paced the room, the colour came back to her cheek, the light came back to her eyes. A new life and fresh energy seemed to spring up within her, and she grasped George's letter in her hand, and struck it against her bosom with an action of the hand and a responsive movement of the breast which was almost triumphant. This thing which she had done, which had looked like ruin, would be her way of escape.

Routh's refusal to return home immediately annoyed, puzzled, and disheartened her. Why was he so hard to move, so difficult to convince, so insensible to danger? His plea was business; if this business was what she hoped and believed it to be, that of preparation, he should have come home to learn the new and urgent need for its expedition. Why was he so hard to her? Why had he no thought for her wishes, no compassion on her suspense? Harriet could not but ask herself that, though she strove against the deadly suffering the answer brought her.

Thus the time wore on drearily, until Harriet carelessly took from the table the slip of paper which contained a whole revelation for her.

Of the hours which succeeded she could not have given an account herself. How the fury of jealousy, of love betrayed, of faith violated, was reawakened within her, and inflamed to the wildest and most desperate pitch; how she writhed under the shame and the scorn which her husband's baseness forced her to feel. She had had profoundest pity, readiest help, for the criminal; but for this pitiful, cowardly, cruel liar nothing but contempt—nothing! Ah, yes, something more, and that made it all the harder—contempt and love.

The woman was here, then—here, in London, on the spot to ruin him, lured hither by him. His false heart planned; his guilty hands dug the pit into which he was to fall; and now his feet were close upon the brink. This rendered him deaf and blind; for this he had basely deceived her, his best, his only friend; for this he had come to regard and treat her as his enemy; and now Harriet had to make a desperate effort indeed to rally all her strength and courage. She had to put the suffering aside, to let all her hopes go, to face a new and almost desperate condition of affairs, and to think how he was to be saved. It must be in spite of himself. This time, it must be in defiance of himself.

She had passed through a long period of suffering—if time is to be measured by pain—before Routh came home. She had not nearly thought it out; she had only reached a resolution to be patient and peaceful, and to conceal her knowledge of his treachery if any effort could give her the strength to do so, when she heard his key in the lock, and the next moment his hand on the door-handle.

There was confusion in the expression of Routh's shifty black eyes, some embarrassment in the tone of his voice. They were slight;

but she saw and understood them. Her heart gave one angry bound under the paper which lay securely in her bosom, but her steady face took no change from the pulsation.

"Sorry I couldn't get back. I got away as soon as I could," said Routh, as he threw aside his coat and put his hat down. Harriet pushed a chair towards him, and he sat down before she answered:

"I am sorry, too, Stewart. I can hardly think any business can have equalled in importance such an occurrence as this."

She put George Dallas's letter into his hand, and eagerly watched him, while, with a face convulsed by anger, hatred, and all unholy passions, he read it.

If she could have seen his heart! If she could have read the devilish project that filled it! If she could have seen that in the discovery of the new and urgent danger he had seen, not blind to that danger indeed, but catching at the chance included in it, a means of realising his atrocious plot against her! If she could have distinguished, amid the surging, passionate thoughts and impulses which raged within him, this one, which each second made more clear:

"This is my opportunity. All is settled, all is right; *she* and I are safe. I have triumphed, and this cursed letter gives me a better chance than any I could have formed or made. This infernal idiot is always my curse and my dupe; however, he has done me a good turn this time."

If Harriet, watching the changes in her husband's countenance, could have read these thoughts, she might have interpreted aright the ferocity which blazed in his wicked eyes, while a cynical sneer curled his lip, as he flung the letter violently on the floor, starting up from his chair.

Harriet had seen Routh in a passion more than once, though only once had that passion been directed against herself, and she was not a woman, even when its victim, to be frightened by a man's temper. But she was frightened now, really and truly frightened, not, however, by the violence of his rage, but because she did not believe in it. She did not understand his game; she saw he was playing one; why he feigned this fury she could not comprehend, but she knew it was feigned, and she was frightened. Against complicated deception of this kind she was powerless. She could not oppose successful art to the ingenious skill with which he was courting his own ruin, to save him. She could not disentangle this thought from the confusion in her brain; she felt only its first thrill of conviction, she only shrank from it with swift, sharp, physical pain, when Routh turned upon her with a torrent of angry and fierce reproaches.

"This is your doing," he said, the violence of his simulated anger hurrying his words, and rendering them almost unintelligible. "I owe it to you that this cursed fool has me in his power, if the idiot only finds it out, and knows how to use it, more securely than I ever had him in mine. This is your skill and your wisdom; your caution and your management, is it? Like

a fool, I trusted a woman—you were always so sure of yourself, you know, and here's the result. You keep this pretty piece of conviction in your desk, and produce it just in the nick of time. I don't wonder you wanted me home; I don't wonder you were in such a hurry to give me such a proof of your boasted cleverness."

Her clear blue eyes were upon him; his restless black eyes shifted under her gaze, but could not escape it. She did not release him for an instant from that piercing look, which became, with each word he spoke, more and more alight with scorn and power. The steady look maddened him, the feigned passion changed to real rage, the man's evil face paled.

She slightly raised her hand, and pointed to the chair he had left; he kicked it savagely away. She spoke, her hand still extended. "Stewart, I do not understand you, but I am not taken in by you. What are you aiming at? Why are you pretending to this violent and unreasonable anger?"

"Pretending!" he exclaimed, with an oath; "it is no pretence, as you shall find. Pretending! Woman, you have ruined me, and I say—"

"And I say," she interposed, as she slowly rose, and stood upright before him, her head raised, her steady eyes still mercilessly set on his, "this is a vain and ridiculous pretence. You cannot long conceal its motive from me: whatever game you are playing, I will find it out."

"Will you, by —?" he said, fiercely.

"I will, for your own sake," she answered, calmly. And, standing before him, she touched him lightly on the breast with her small white hand. "Stop! don't speak. I say, for your own sake. You and I, Stewart, who were once one, are two now; but that makes no change in me. I don't reproach you."

"Oh, don't you?" he said. "I know better. There's been nothing but whining and reproaches lately."

"Now you are acting again, and again I tell you I will find out why. The day of reproach can never—shall never—come; the day of ruin is near, awfully near—"

"You've taken care of that."

"Again! You ought to know me better, Stewart; you can't lie to me undetected. In time I shall know the truth, now I discern the lie. But all this is vain. Read once more." She took up the letter, smoothed it out, and held it towards him. He struck it out of her hand, and cursed her.

She looked at him in blank amazement for a moment, and then said:

"You are not drunk again, Stewart? You are not mad? If you are not, listen to me, for your fate is rushing upon you. The time may be counted by hours. Never mind my share in this new event, never mind what you really think, or what you pretend to think about it. It makes my appeal to you strong, irresistible. This is no fit of woman's terror; this is no whim, no wish to induce you to desert your harvest-field, to turn your back upon the promise of the only

kind of life you care to live. Here is a link in the evidence against you, if suspicion lights upon you (and it must), which is of incontestable strength. Here, in Arthur Felton's writing, is the memoranda of the shares which you bought, and paid for with Arthur Felton's money. Stewart! Stewart! are you blind and mad, indeed, that you stay here, that you let the precious time escape you, that you dally with your fate? Let us begone, I say; let us escape while we may. George Dallas is not our only foe, not our only danger—formidable, indeed; but remember, Stewart, Mr. Felton comes to seek for his son; remember that we have to dread the man's father!"

The pleading in her voice was agonising in its intensity, the lustrous excitement in her blue eyes was painful, the pallor of her face was frightful. She had clasped her hands round his arm, and the fingers held him like steel fetters. He tried to shake off her hold, but she did not seem aware of the movement.

"I tell you," she continued, "no dream was ever wilder than your hope of escape, if those two men come to London and find you here; no such possibility exists. Let us go; let us get out of the reach of their power."

"By —, I'll put myself out of Dallas's reach by a very simple method, if you don't hold your cursed tongue," said Routh, with such ferocity that Harriet let go her hold of him, and shrank as if he had struck her. "If you don't want me to tell Mr. Felton what has become of his son, and put him on to George's trail myself, you'll drop this kind of thing at once. In fact," he said, with a savage sneer, "I hardly think a better way out of our infernal blunder could be found."

"Stewart! Stewart!" She said no more.

"Now listen to me, Harriet," he went on, in furious anger, but in a suppressed tone. "If you are anything like the wise woman you used to be, you won't provoke a desperate man. Let me alone, I tell you—let me get out of this as I best can. The worst part of it is what you have brought upon me. I don't want George Dallas to come to any serious grief, if I can help it; but if he threatens danger to me, he must clear the way, that's all. I dare say you are very sorry, and all that. You rather took to Master George lately, believed in his prudence, and his mother, and all that kind of thing; but I can't help that. I never had a turn for sentiment myself; but this you may be sure of—only gross blundering can bring anything of the kind about—if any one is to swing for Deane, it shall be Dallas, and not I."

A strong shudder shook Harriet's frame as she heard her husband's words. But she repressed it, and spoke:

"You refuse to listen to me, then, Stewart. You will not keep your promise—your promise which, however vague, I have built upon and lived upon since we left Homburg? You will not 'think of' what I said to you there? Not though it is a thousand times more important

now? You will not leave this life, and come away to peace and safety?"

"No, no; a thousand times no!" said Routh, in the wildest fury. "I will not—I will not! A life of peace and safety; yes, and a life of poverty, and *you*—" he added, in a tone of bitterest scorn and hatred.

A wonderful look came into the woman's face, as she heard his cruel and dastardly words. As the pink had faded into the white upon her cheeks, so now the white deadened into grey—into an ashen ghostly grey, and her dry lips parted slowly, emitting a heavy sigh.

He made a step or two towards the door, she retreating before him. And when he had almost reached it, she fell suddenly upon her knees, and flung her arms round him with desperate energy.

"Stewart," she said, in a whisper indeed, yet in a voice to be heard amid a whirlwind, "my husband, my love, my life, my darling, don't mind me! Leave me here; it will be safer, better, less suspicious. Go away, and leave me. I don't care, indeed. I don't want to go with you. Go alone, and make sure of your safety! Stewart, say you'll go—say you'll go!"

While she was speaking, he was striving to loosen her hold upon him, but in vain. A short brief warfare was waged in that moment in his soul. If he softened to her now, if he yielded to her now, all was undone. And yet what love was this—what strange, and wondrous, and potent kind of love was this? Not the kind of love which had looked at him, an hour or two ago, out of the rich black eyes of the American widow, that had trembled in the tones of her voice. But a vision of the beauty he coveted, of the wealth he needed, of the freedom he panted for, rose before Routh's bewildered brain, and the strife ended. Evil had its own way unchecked henceforth to the end.

He raised his right arm and struck her heavily upon the face; the clasp of her hands gave way, and she sank upon the floor. Then he stepped over her, as she lay prostrate in the doorway, and left the room. When she raised herself, she pushed back her hair, and looked round, with a dreary amazement upon her troubled face, and she heard the key turned in his dressing-room door.

The day had dawned when Harriet Routh went gently up-stairs to her bedroom. She was perfectly calm. She opened the window-shutters and let the light in before she lay down on her bed. Also, she unlocked a box, which she took from her wardrobe, and looked carefully into it, then put it away satisfied. As she closed her eyes, she said, half aloud, "I can do no more; but she can save him, and she shall."

At one o'clock on the following day, Harriet Routh, attired, as usual, in simple but ladylike dress, and presenting an appearance on which the most impertinent of pages would not have dared to cast an imputation, presented herself at No. 4, Hollington-square, Brompton. Mrs. Bembridge lived there, but Mrs. Bembridge was

not at home, and would not be at home until late in the evening. Would the lady leave her name? No; but she desired Mrs. Bembridge might be informed that a lady had called, and would call again at the same hour on the morrow, who had found an article of dress lost, at Homburg, by Mrs. Bembridge, and which she would restore to Mrs. Bembridge in person, but not otherwise.

As Harriet was returning home, she walked down Piccadilly, and saw Mr. Felton and George Dallas alighting from a cab at the door of the house in which their lodgings had been engaged.

"Very fair, too," said Mrs. P. Ireton Bembridge, when she received Harriet's message from her maid, "and very natural she should expect a reward. Ladies often take advantage of that kind of thing to give money to the poor. I shan't grudge her anything she may ask in reason, I shall be so glad to get back my golden egg."

HOUSE-HUNTING IN LISBON.

IN a recent number of *All the Year Round*,* I was attracted by an article headed *House-Hunting*. I turned to it with the morbid interest referable to my own experience in that branch of misfortune. I put it down with a feeling of triumphant superiority. "What," said I to myself, "can any one profess to know of the misery of house-hunting who starts his complaint with the announcement that the house he sought was to be 'about an hour's journey from London'?"

I entered on the terrible sport of house-hunting, in Lisbon.

I had been recently married; though not so recently but that my packages amounted in number to sixty, exclusive of a baby and a sick-nurse who had borne me company on my voyage across the Bay of Biscay. Being of a cheerful temperament, I had thought, "Well, it is only for three days; and, once landed, we shall soon get a house, and with all our English comforts around us, we shall have the home-like feeling which makes all places pleasant."

So much has been said and sung of the fairy-like aspect of Lisbon as you see it from the river, and the material removal of such visions as you enter the town, that of this I need say nothing. A few hours after our first sight of the many roofs, out of the number of which we hoped one would soon shelter us, we found ourselves crossing a magnificent square, dotted about with the usual number of beggars showing the very unequal share of limbs, and toes, and fingers, which seem to be distributed capriciously among the poor of Southern Europe. Picking our way among those whom nature had too bountifully supplied with legs, and followed by others whose deficiency in those members had been supplemented by wheels, we reached a very clean and comfortable hotel. Here we agreed

to rest for that day, and to commence our labours in house-hunting to-morrow.

Our arrival was quickly known to a few of the English inhabitants, who had been asked to be kind to us by "mutual friends" in England. They shook their heads discouragingly when we talked of hoping to find a house and furnish two or three rooms in a few weeks. We thought they were not aware how humble were our pretensions, and how easily satisfied we should be with a small clean house. Accordingly, next morning we hired a carriage, and started at a pace unknown to London cabmen, even when they are offered an extra fare to catch the last train. This pace was scarcely an advantage to us, as our hunt could only be carried on by driving along the streets until we saw a house with small squares of white paper, called "scritos," wafered on each pane of its windows indicating houses to let. Before one of these houses, of promising outward appearance, we stopped our carriage.

A number of Portuguese women looked out of the windows of that house, and out of all the adjoining windows. One hurried look at their tawny faces, coarse matted hair, and brawny arms, one tone of their coarse masculine voices, explained to me why the beauty of Portuguese women had never been sung by any bards but their own. After vainly striving to make ourselves understood to these Lisbon maidens, in Italian and Spanish, as well as by a judicious mixture of the two, we were beginning to despair of success, when our coachman awoke to a consciousness that as we wished to see the interior of this house to let, and as the door was locked, it was not improbable we might be trying to get the key. This discovery he confided in very voluble tones (assisted by many gestures of opening an ideal door with an imaginary key) to all the women at the windows, as well as to a great many more who had collected round us; and, to our infinite relief, one of our audience, who had disappeared after the eloquence of the coachman subsided, reappeared with a key. This promising-looking house had evidently been built by some one who had the idea of Lisbon as it appears from the Tagus, and Lisbon as it is in reality, strongly engraved on his memory. A dingy staircase faced us, running steeply up between two blank walls, without balusters or any turn or object to break its monotony, except one dejected-looking spider which had spun its web on a flat surface of the wall in despair of finding a corner. Once on the landing above, we found ourselves in a labyrinth of tiny rooms and alcoves, not one of which was of a size to be rendered habitable. Innumerable passages intersected these small chambers with no apparent object, except to darken and diminish the little rooms to which they did not lead. No one room communicated with another: the solitary exception being that the drawing-room opened into the kitchen.

"This will never do," we said, as we went down the dark staircase. Once more we drove along the streets, in quest of another

* See vol. xvi., page 84.

house. Presently we stopped with a prolonged jerk, and our driver having turned his horses at right angles to the carriage, in order to prevent our rolling backwards down the steepest of hills, pointed to a long row of windows with the "To Let" indications we were seeking. Similar preliminaries were gone through as before, with the same result, only that this time our friends the beggars found us out. These had quite a new array of peculiarities, and there was a combination system at work among them, by which two established the exact complement of limbs and features usually bestowed on one. For instance, a boy with no legs was perched on the back of a blind man, whom he worked on the principle of a velocipede. This amalgamation appeared to give them a power of ubiquity, and wherever we stopped we found our velocipede friends there before us.

For more than a week we continued our search with a contented spirit which made us say, "To-day we *must* be more lucky." At last we fell in with a charitable friend, who offered to accompany us and act as interpreter; but this was not the only help he rendered us. He had heard of a house in a good situation, with large rooms and a few fireplaces; in short, luxuries such as we had ceased to think existed in Lisbon. To this palace we drove, and found it all it had been described, and all it claimed to be, for it called itself "Palacio Antigo del Conde de —," and certainly no one could have doubted its antiquity, that might have failed to discover it was a palace. The paper was falling from the walls, the windows would not shut, and the few doors which could claim superiority in that respect over the windows, would not open. However, the plan of the house was good, and the thought of a fire at Christmas was so cheering that we begged our interpreter to explain to the landlord that, if he would put it into habitable repair, we would become his tenants. Hereupon he began a perfect fire of argument in praise of his house, and dilated at immense length on each of its real and supposed advantages, until he at last arrived at his voluble peroration: which was simply to the effect that he would do nothing.

Some smaller incidents of our wanderings I will not mention—such as coming out of a house to find our driver asleep at the bottom of the carriage with his head on the cushions, the result of our conveying home a large stock of the finest fleas. Neither will I enlarge upon the ignominious circumstance of our being more than once followed by half a dozen street curs barking at our heels.

A fortnight of this life, and we were humbled. Our British spirit of incredulity was nearly crushed, and we were willing, not only to hear advice, but to take it. The advice was, "Give it up now. In a few months the half-yearly general move will take place, and you will have a much wider choice." Thus we found what we wanted. We left Lisbon, and forgot dirty houses, smells, and insects, amid the lovely scenery of Cintra. Once comfortably settled

there, we received from one of the friends who had been most active in helping us, a letter to the effect that a charming house in Lisbon was vacant; and we pounced upon it.

When we are asked, "How did you get this beautiful house?" our answer is not one which would do for the general guidance of unfortunates in the trying position of house-hunting in Lisbon. "By taking no trouble, and trusting to the chapter of accidents to find for us what no industry on our part could discover."

THE SKELETON IN THE CLOSET.

So many of our circle lost money in the panic of Black Friday, that it was like being out of the fashion *not* to have lost, and we were in it—in it to the extreme. It put off Emmy's wedding, and there were a few days when I thought it would put an end to it; but the young people determined otherwise, got married on their hopes, youth, and courage, and went away in August to make the best of the world at the other side of it. Our London establishment was finally broken up, and after some inquiry for a cheap neighbourhood where good education was to be had for boys, we travelled down into Shropshire, and thought ourselves fallen quite in luck's way when we found Ash Grange, a roomy house in a large garden, not ten minutes' walk from the grammar school, to let for the very moderate rental of thirty pounds.

The easy adaptability of common human nature to altered circumstances is wonderful and merciful! Here was my John, who had toiled and milled from youth to grey hairs to get rich honestly, who had contemplated withdrawing from business with his tens of thousands, and had retired with a few hundreds snatched out of the fire, looking, after a month of country life, healthier and happier than I had seen him look for years. The worst was come, and we were not utterly beggars; we had suffered shipwreck, but we had got safe to land; we had lost an immense fortune, but we had not lost character, nor caused the ruin of others; we had come down to our primitive condition of neither riches nor poverty, and I think I liked it better than the vanity and vexation of spirit that had attended our gradual rise and progress in London society. Emmy was gone, but she had taken her heart's desire with her, and we had the three boys left for our love, care, and occupation. They needed no consolation that they could not find for themselves in our haunted Grange and wilderness garden; and though Willie was sorry to leave his masters and friends at the Charter House, he soon liked those he found at the grammar school.

I wish I could make you see the house; it is a very pleasant place. It stands end-ways to the road, and a high wall, enclosing the garden, runs along it, back and front, for nearly a hundred yards; ash-trees and beech-trees stretching their branches over the parapet, and making a delightful shady walk of the pathway of an afternoon. It had been untenanted for several

years before we took it, and the owner was glad to put it in sufficient repair to ensure our remaining. The sitting-rooms, on the ground floor, were large, but low and rather gloomy; the smaller we fitted up as our dining-parlour, and the other we abandoned to the boys, to be their carpenter's shop and private snuggery. My drawing-room I made up-stairs, as far as possible out of hearing of their sawing and hammering, and a little closet opening from it, and extending over the porch, John lined with shelves, and dignified with the title of book-room.

Of our quarters I need say no more. The boys' den is the most spacious apartment in the house, and had always been used as the principal apartment until we entered on possession. The wall had been once coloured of a pinky hue, and the panels moulded with gilding. The lofty, narrow mantelshelf—supported on carved pilasters, was coloured like the wall which, on the left, extending to the back of the room—was flush with it, and on the right, extending to the windows, fell into a deep recess. The windows looked into the garden; the door opened into the hall, which was divided in the middle with a screen to exclude draughts.

The landlord was agreeably surprised at our bidding him not re-paper this room; but he was at the same time astonished I did not prefer it for my parlour. And we were equally astonished at his inquiry if I was deterred from preferring it because it had got a bad name in the local traditions as being *haunted*. We had not heard of its bad name, and naturally begged for explanation. He told us that the last occupants were an overworked London clergyman and his wife. That to accommodate them during a long summer, he had furnished this room and two others; that the lady was comfortable and contented, but that her husband, who was out of health, took a fixed idea into his mind that a female shadow, which was not his wife's, constantly pervaded the room. He was most sensitive to its presence at morning and evening prayers. Often, at other times, when reading a book or gazing meditatively into the fire of nights, he felt it beside him; but when he bent his eyes to discern it clearly, it was gone. By degrees, as he recovered his strength and mental tone, his spectral visitant came less frequently, and before he returned to his town duties in October, it had quite ceased to trouble him, and he spoke of it himself as an hallucination arising from a distressed brain. In popular parlance, however, it had become a ghost, and the Grange a haunted house.

The boys heard the story, and only liked their den the better for it. For my part, I pray that I may never come into that state of mind and body when I shall imagine myself a ghost-seer. For some weeks after they had made a Babel of the empty room, I expected tales of wonder and imagination to be brought to my ears; but none were brought save of no cupboards, no shelves, no anything but the floor on which to deposit their precious belongings. Their father gave them a shabby escrutoire which he had bought

for an old song at a sale in the town, and a Pembroke table with drawers, but still they were not satisfied; and Willie, one morning, impatiently struck the wall by the fireplace, wishing that were cupboards. Most unexpectedly, it gave back a hollow sound, and something like plaster rattled down within. He struck again; he listened; his brothers listened; they all struck, and they all listened; they were sure the wall was hollow; that there was a recess to correspond with that on the other side of the fireplace, which was only boarded up and canvassed.

It was a holiday, and it was rainy. They had hours before them for investigation and mischief, and they set to work; carefully, at first, and near the floor, but soon with greater boldness. They cut out a section of the canvas, and discovered that it was not plain joiner's work behind, but panelling, like the rest of the room. They ripped away the canvas from beside the pilaster of the chimney, and espied hinges, chinks—unmistakable evidences of a closet in the wainscot large enough to appease their most exorbitant longings for store-room. They persevered in spite of choking dust and falling plaster, ignorant of landlord's claims for dilapidation and of their father's displeasure, and by noon they had completely laid open the hidden cupboard doors, and Willie had come to me for some keys. I asked him what he wanted keys for? He told me about the closet—such a large double closet! I proposed to go and see it. He begged me to stay where I was until they had effected a clearance of the rubbish. My suspicions and fears were roused, and I went at once. Rubbish, indeed! The floor was littered with torn canvas, and the air thick with the powdery dust of the wall-colouring. An old charwoman, Bridget Johnes, whom we occasionally employed in the house, had preceded me on the boys' petition to help them remove the ruins, and there she stood agape, resting on her broom, and crying, "Bless her life, if there was not Madame Stéphanie's closet again!" The boys eyed me a little anxiously as I remarked that I did not know what their father and Mr. Baxter, the landlord, might say, but Willie began all the same to try the keys. The key in common use for most of the other cupboards fitted this lock; he turned it, and with a wrench pulled open one leaf of the door: and, as he pulled, out fell, with dry, light, jingling rattle, a skeleton with a mass of tattered, colourless clothing still enveloping it.

The curious investigator sprang fast enough out of the way. I cannot tell what any of us felt or said, but the first words I understood were from the mouth of Bridget Johnes. She had stepped across the floor, and was stooping to examine a ring that hung on one finger of the clenched skeleton hand. "It is poor Mam'selle Elise," said she; "they told us she'd gone home to France."

I sent one of the boys instantly to bring Mr. Baxter; and, before he came, their father was on the scene. The discovery was something more than a nine days' wonder. There was a long

inquiry before the magistrates, and much raking up of old memories, which ended in the silent burial of the bones in the churchyard, and in the addition of a mysterious tragedy to the local annals. I will tell the story briefly, as they tell it; not in shreds and patches, as it was painfully evolved under the investigation by authority.

In the autumn of 1789, during the earliest rush of French emigrants to England away from the Paris mob which had just drawn the first blood of revolution at the storming of the Bastille, there came over two ladies of rank, sisters, middle-aged and single. Two servants accompanied them, a man and a woman. The four were received by a Catholic family in Staffordshire, and entertained for several months, in the hope and expectation that they would soon be able to return safely to France. But as things there went from bad to worse, and the hospitality of their host wearied, the ladies sought a house for themselves. Travelling towards Wales as a district where they might live cheaply and obscurely until the return of better days, they lighted on Ash Grange, which the owner and occupier had vacated but a few weeks before for a narrow lodging in the chancel of the church. The heir was Mr. March, a young gentleman of aristocratic sympathies and considerable wealth, who resided at Gellert's Gap, a beautiful estate about three miles distant. He offered the French strangers the use of the Grange furnished just as it stood, and they accepted it as generously as it was offered.

The ladies presently became known to the neighbourhood as Madame Stéphanie and Madame Rose le Perier, the last supposed to be a name assumed in lieu of one of higher distinction. The man-servant was Monsieur Rigault, the woman, Madame Bette. Superior servants they evidently were; but, in casting in their lot with the mistresses whom they had followed into their triste exile, they had left behind them all selfish remembrances of past estate, and shared with cheerfulness the privations of their poverty. And they were very poor. The secrets of their household could not be kept in that little idle place, though they took no service from without to carry gossip abroad; for the small shopkeepers knew every penny of their expenditure, and Monsieur Rigault, who catered for them, Frenchman, and ingenious Frenchman as he was, often betrayed to their shrewd inquisitiveness the difficulty he had in making up the materials of the dinners he cooked.

The ladies were rarely seen beyond the precincts of their home, and the only persons they admitted within their doors was Mr. March, who was a Catholic like themselves, and a priest who came over from Shrewsbury to visit them at stated intervals. To Shrewsbury also they went to attend the services of their church on great festival days; and once, when they remained absent more than a week, they were said to have gone to meet some fellow-emigrants of royal rank at Alton Towers, the seat of the

great papist Earl of Shrewsbury. Madame Stéphanie was a person of grandiose air—not beautiful at all, but of a most magnificent stateliness, like a woman bred in courts, and used to think of nobility as the highest grace of God. Madame Rose was less imposing than her sister, but more pleasing, and several years younger. Madame Stéphanie was growing grey and wrinkled; Madame Rose had still so much of the bloom of youth as may remain with a handsome brunette of five-and-thirty.

During the second autumn of their residence at Ash Grange, Monsieur Rigault made a journey to France. News that the Tuileries had been sacked, the Swiss Guard slaughtered, and the king and his family imprisoned in the Temple, had reached England before he started, and the terrible massacres of September were reported immediately after. Next came a rumour that the king was to be put upon his trial before the National Convention, then intelligence that his head had fallen on the scaffold, then of the beginning of the *Terror*.

While Monsieur Rigault was away, Madame Stéphanie made his little household purchases in the town. People thus grew familiar with her grandeur, and very haggard and wan her grandeur was—ininitely more piteous than humility. Yet it was impossible to feel sympathy with her. Monsieur Rigault had won real liking and respect amongst the shopkeepers, but Madame Stéphanie treated the simple folks with that haughty rigour which French writers tell us was the habit of the great in France in the generations before the terrible blood-letting of the Revolution. La Bruyère, the court philosopher and moralist of Louis Fourteenth's reign, says it was to him a thing always new the ferocity with which men treated other men. He saw certain wild animals, male and female, scattered over the fields, black, livid, all burnt with the sun, bound to the soil which they ploughed and harrowed with invincible obstinacy; they had an articulate voice, and when they rose upon their feet they showed a human face, and, indeed, they were men. At night they retired into their lairs, where they lived, on black bread, water, and roots; they saved other men the toil of sowing and reaping, but themselves lacked, even to hunger, the bread they produced. Madame Stéphanie le Perier, in the cold inhuman pride of her character, showed the latest development of the noble races that had lived for ages by the bitter labour of such degraded serfs; and now the scum of their long perdition had seethed to the surface of society, and society was dying by wholesale of the poisonous miasma.

In the early spring, Monsieur Rigault was back at the Grange, but for a few days only; and then he disappeared again. It was winter, settled and cold, before he once more presented himself in the accustomed shops with his thrifty basket. He was then full of sorrow. His lean resolute face ran down with tears when the shopkeepers asked him the truth of those awful scenes in Paris which their newspaper feebly depicted, but of which he had been

an eye-witness, disguised, and in peril of his life. The details, in his broken English, were often grotesque, but they were pathetic too. This time he had not returned alone. He had brought with him a young girl whose father and mother had faithfully adhered to the unfortunate royal family, and had perished in October, only a few days in advance of the queen. This girl was the *Mam'selle Elise*, and the niece of *Madame Stéphanie* and *Madame Rose*.

Mam'selle Elise was not more than seven or eight years old when she came to *Ash Grange*. She was a dark-haired, handsome child, very imperious, wilful, and passionate, whose bursts of fury *Madame Stéphanie* severely controlled by imprisonment in the great cupboard of her salon; so, at least, the tale went in the town, where the little princess was often seen dancing along with *Monsieur Rigault*, who adored her, and where she was much noticed for her beauty, her singularity, and tragical orphanhood. She had no playfellows but her grief-aged kinswomen and their servants, and the imperious, wilful child grew up into an imperious, wilful maiden, full of caprices and madcap vagaries. At fifteen she was notoriously wild, unruly, and fierce; and when her whims were contradicted she would threaten to stab herself, drown herself, poison herself—anything to be avenged on her guardians. She was sent to a convent in *Warwickshire* to receive education and discipline; but, after the lapse of a year, she came home to the *Grange* no milder than she went. She must have been as much out of her place in a convent as a hawk in a dove-cot; for restraint was intolerable to her, and she had no religious vocation whatever.

From this period *Mam'selle Elise* assumed to herself considerable freedom, perhaps licence of conduct, and she and *Madame Stéphanie* were openly at feud. The young lady detested the poverty and narrowness of her life; the elder abominated her niece's condescensions to gain a little society. She had struck up an intimacy with a family near the *Grange*, who were of no rank and of no reputation. They had grown rich on the troubles of the times, and the sons, half-educated, dissolute, handsome young men, were making haste to squander their fortunes by aping the luxuries and extravagances of the squirearchy. It was presently whispered in the town that *Mam'selle Elise* had an intrigue with the eldest son, and it came to the ears of *Monsieur Rigault* that a girl who had lately been admitted into the house to help *Madame Bette*, acted as their go-between. This girl was *Bridget Johnes*. That day, or the next, *Bridget Johnes* received her discharge, and being quit of her scruples with her service, she opened her mouth and told astounding tales of the quarrels between *Madame Stéphanie* and *Mam'selle Elise*; like she-devils, she said they were—but she was sorry for *Mam'selle Elise* too. Concerning the alleged intrigue she was more reticent; she denied, indeed, that there was any intrigue.

This exposure took place at the opening of the year 1802, and about the same time died

Mr. March, by whose courtesy the exiles held the *Grange* rent-free. His heir was his sister, who was married to a *Mr. Baxter*, the father and mother of the present owner. To secure them against disturbance, *Mr. March* in his will made them a gift of the *Grange* for such time as they might be pleased to occupy it. If they vacated it, the *Baxters* were to acquire possession, but otherwise *Madame Stéphanie* and *Madame Rose* were at liberty to retain it for their joint and separate lives. The Peace of *Amiens* opened the Continent in the spring, and the *Baxters*, who were not rich, had great hopes that the French ladies would hurry home, and leave the *Grange* to them; but they made no signs of stirring. They had lost all in France—rank, honour, name, fortune, and kindred—and were not likely to recover them under the consulate of *Napoleon Bonaparte*, then mounting to the pinnacle of power and glory.

One fine evening in May, *Bridget Johnes*, who had gone to be dairymaid at the rectory, had occasion to walk down the glebe pastures that skirt the *Grange* garden, and divide it from the river. A holly-hedge forms the boundary, which is solid and lofty as a wall. *Mam'selle Elise* had, to *Bridget's* knowledge, surmounted this barrier many a time to meet her lover, and *Bridget* had kept her counsel faithfully while she connived at or assisted her evasions. But after this evening she was less secret. She met *mam'selle* walking by the river alone, and they had some conversation. *Mam'selle Elise* exhibited a ring set with green stones, which she had accepted as a betrothal-ring from her lover, who, she said, wished her to fly with him to Scotland, where they could be married without leave of her guardians.

On certain evenings subsequent to this *Bridget Johnes* found opportunities of going into the pastures, prompted by curiosity to learn how the elopement scheme went on. But she met *Mam'selle Elise* no more. Once she saw the lover prowling about watchfully, who told her he had not been able to get a glimpse of his sweetheart for days. Neither was surprised at this, for *Madame Stéphanie* had means of keeping her unruly young kinswoman in durance, which she used without the smallest scruple. If she had seen the ring, and if *Mam'selle Elise* had braved her with an avowal of her design to escape from the *Grange* into the arms of her plebeian lover, *Bridget* had no doubt that she was expiating her iniquity in close confinement—possibly in her own chamber, or quite as possibly in the great closet of the salon, to which narrow seclusion, with the aid of *Madame Bette*, *Madame Stéphanie* had more than once committed her, even since her return from the convent.

Monsieur Rigault had never lost the distressed countenance that he had brought back after his last journey to Paris, but at this time he looked more than ever wretched, more than ever haggard and perplexed. He was silent too. When he entered the shops he had no answer to any bit of news from his friends. If

they asked him why he did not go home now that France was at peace, and multitudes of exiles and English flocking over to taste the long-forbidden delights of Paris, he only shook his head. One day, however, he was seen mounting the Shrewsbury mail-coach, and again Madame Stéphanie reappeared in the town, more rigid, haughty, and formal, if possible, than before. Then it began to be said that Monsieur Rigault had returned to France for good, and that he had taken Mam'selle Elise with him. This was hardly credited at first, for Monsieur Rigault had given no warning of his departure to his humble friends, and had made them no farewell; but it was presently believed and accepted as quite natural that he should have set off thus secretly, if he had to convey away Mam'selle Elise. That Mam'selle Elise should have quietly consented to go was no marvel except to her lover, who persisted for several weeks in watching for her still about the Grange. Then there flew abroad a rumour, which originated with Bridget Johnes, that the young lady had drowned herself or had been put away, and this rumour presently grew so loud that the rector, who was also a magistrate, felt it his duty to have an interview with Madame Stéphanie. Her explanation satisfied him. She said that her niece had been conducted back to France and consigned to the survivors of her mother's family, who had recovered a portion of their property, were in favour with the present government, and had expressed repeatedly a desire to adopt her, before she (Madame Stéphanie) could agree to yield up her only brother's only child. She added, that she and her sister were now growing old; that they had no portion to give with the petite, and therefore they had striven with their devotion, and had sent her away from them. She made no allusion to the now notorious intrigue that had subsisted between Mam'selle Elise and her low-born lover; but this the rector, who was himself of high Tory principles, perfectly understood and sympathised with. He would have locked up his own daughter, or have sent her into banishment, had she so dared to misconduct herself.

No one doubted the truth of the rector's assurance when he lulled the popular suspicions that had begun to gather round the Grange by publishing Madame Stéphanie's explanation. The lover of Mam'selle Elise accepted it like the rest; but, instead of putting up with her removal as an inexorable separation, he formed a sudden resolve to go across to France in search of her. Of course neither Madame Stéphanie nor the rector, who felt with her on this matter of plebeian lovers, would vouchsafe him any clue to the whereabouts of either the young lady or her attendant, Monsieur Rigault. He, however, set out at the end of September or the beginning of October, and his journey, with the quest in view, was long after talked about as a romance of affection.

For several months nothing was heard of him; his own people said he had fallen into the slough of Parisian wickedness and revelry, and that

was why. But in the ensuing spring there came a letter with intelligence that his endeavours to discover his lady-love had been all in vain, and that he was about to return home. He never did return, however, for the rupture of the Peace of Amiens took place in May, 1803, and all the travelling English in France were detained prisoners by command of the first consul. He died before a new peace arrived to set them free, and, with his memory, the events of that time faded into oblivion.

The sole inhabitants of the Grange now were Madame Stéphanie, Madame Rose, and Madame Bette. Only Madame Stéphanie ever encountered the public gaze. Her sister had become a permanent invalid, but no physician was invited to relieve her maladies. Their poverty seemed more pinching than before, and their seclusion more complete. The rector endeavoured to befriend them, but could never succeed in winning their confidence, and at length ceased to seek it.

The next change was the death of Madame Rose, which occurred in 1815, when all England was ringing its bells and rejoicing over the glorious victory of Waterloo. Once more the Baxters expected to come into possession of the Grange, and once more they were disappointed. The restoration of the Bourbons appeared to bring no joy, no revival of hope to the remaining pair of exiled women. Madame Stéphanie might not have heard of it, for any sign she made. As for Madame Bette, who ever looked on her dark and furrowed face once was not inclined to look again. She was a most forbidding personage, mute as the grave. During all her long sufferance in England she had never picked up a word of English speech, nor made a single English friend.

The two lived on together to quite extreme old age. Madame Bette died the first, and died suddenly. Madame Stéphanie, aged as she was, still kept much of her ancient alertness and vigour, resisting every inducement proffered by the Baxters to remove into lodgings and accept from them the tendance necessary at her time of life. She survived Madame Bette about eighteen months, and died as solitary as she had lived. For two or three days she was missing from her usual haunts, and, when the house was forcibly entered, was found on the floor of the salon in a dying condition. She made great efforts, as of one who wishes to speak, but her tongue could form no intelligible words, and before the priest who had been sent for could arrive, she was gone. She was buried beside her sister and servant in the churchyard.

And now, at last, the Baxters entered into possession of the Grange. The old people took up their residence in it, after putting it into habitable repair at the least possible cost; for having brought up a large and expensive family, they had suffered losses, and were less rich in their old age than they had been in their young days. Bridget Johnes was for some years their servant, and though she remembered and spoke of the closet in the salon, it was after the

walls had been redecorated, and then nobody was extravagant or curious enough to care about defacing them to recover it, until our boys took the work in hand. Who boarded up the closet is not known, but there can be no doubt that it kept the secret of murder, and that the skeleton we found was that of Mamselle Elise. Bridget Johnes recognised the betrothal-ring on her hand.

NEW AMERICA.

It would be difficult to find a stronger illustration of the rapid pace at which life may now speed, than a couple of goodly volumes that have adorned our library table for more than a month. Their author, not earlier in the holiday-time of last year than August, scorning such designs for recreation as would have satisfied him no very long time ago by a trip to Brighton, or Bath, or Scarborough, or, by a great effort, to Paris, starts for the furthest reachable corner of America, returns, and before the end of January—in five months—presents us with a handsome book of travels: not confused quires of imperfect observations “dashed off” against time in express trains, but a careful, wise, and graphic picture of the most prominent social phenomena which the newest phases of the New World present. The book is called *NEW AMERICA*; its author, whose holiday work it is, being the well-known and busy journalist, Mr. Hepworth Dixon. The accident of travel has inflicted on literature many incompetent authors; but here, a practised writer—with a distinct purpose set in his mind, gifted with knowledge of what is already to be learnt and keen perception of whatever is new to be met with in his travels, an accomplished literary artist—expresses himself clearly and vividly, interesting his reader not less by his manner than in his matter.

Some of his matter is extremely curious. In America, the land unencumbered by traditions or experiences of the past, the wildest dreams of social organisation get quickly translated into realities, and desires and discontents find free expression. Experiments in social polity are being worked out there, from polygamous Mormonism to marriage-hating Shakerism, which it requires a writer of Mr. Dixon's acuteness, temperance of statement, and freedom from partisanship, to present to the European reader without making him stand aghast.

After a weary and perilous journey across the desert that lies between the Mississippi river and the Rocky Mountains, Mr. Dixon and his companion arrived at Utah, the Mormon city. He describes a square block, ten acres in extent, as the heart of the city—the Mormon holy place, the harem of the young Jerusalem of the West. This centre gives a pattern of form and measurement to the whole city. As yet only the foundations, of massive granite, are laid; Brigham Young attending to the social and physical requirements of his people as matters of earliest importance, while leaving the perfect-

ing of the temple to a later and ripper time. The city, which covers three thousand acres of ground, is laid out in blocks of ten acres each, each block divided into lots of one acre and a quarter, as the regulation amount of land for a cottage and a garden. From each side of the temple starts a street, a hundred feet wide, going out into the level plain, and in straight lines into space. Streets of the same width, and parallel to these, run north and south, east and west, each planted with locust and ailanthus-trees, and cooled by running streams. But in Main-street, the chief thoroughfare for hotels and shops, the gardens have been cut down for the exigencies of trade, and some of the larger stores are built now of red stone, standing side by side with wooden shanties and adobe cots. In each apportioned lot stands a cottage in the midst of fruit-trees; sometimes there are two or three cottages in the orchard, wherein dwell the various wives of the polygamous saint. Elder Hiram Clawson's house is in a lovely garden, red with delicious peaches, plums, and apples, where live his first and second wives, with their nurseries of twenty children; but there is a dainty white bower in the corner, smothered in roses and creepers, and here, with her four boys, lives the youngest wife, Alice, a daughter of Brigham Young, and popularly supposed to be the 'supreme favourite.' They say that Elder Hiram Clawson is courting Emily, the sister of Alice—that he will be soon married to her also; yet “the perils of a double alliance with the Mormon pope are said to be great. Envy among the elders, collision with the Gentiles, jealousy at Camp Douglas, hostility at Washington; but Elder Clawson is said to be ready to take his chance with Sister Emily, as he had done with Alice, answering, as the Mormons put it, Washington theories by Deseret facts.”

No beggars are seen in these long straight dusty green-lined streets—scarcely even a tipsy man; and if you see one, he is a Gentile. The people are quiet and civil. The streets are pastoral and picturesque, as are no other streets in the world. Standing under the locust-trees is an ox come home for the night; a cow at a gate is being milked by a child; Snake Indians, with their long hair, their scant drapery, their proud reserve, are cheapening the dirtiest and cheapest lots; a New Mexican in his broad sombrero is dashing up the dust on his wiry little horse; miners in huge boots and belts are loafing about; officers from the camp, in their dark-blue uniforms, keep a sharp look-out on Mormon ways; and those wild unearthly folk, eager, excited, fatigued, but full of hope and happiness—those sunburnt emigrants just come in from the prairies, sitting under the acacias and dabbling their feet in the running creek, are Woolwich artisans, sober Monmouth farmers, and smart London tradesmen, who have conquered the perils of the journey, and are now admitted as brethren to their Mormon home.

One of the most curiously instructive things

in Utah is the office which Brigham Young has assigned to the theatre. With the foundations of the temple not yet raised above the ground, the theatre is in perfect order. As Mr. Dixon says: "Young feels inclined to go back upon all first principles, in family life to those of Abraham, in social life to those of Thespis. Priests invented both the ancient and the modern stages, and if people like to be light and merry, to laugh and glow, why should their teachers neglect the thousand opportunities offered by a play, of getting them to laugh in the right places, to glow at the proper things? Why should Young not preach moralities from the stage? Why should he not try to reconcile religious feeling with pleasure?"

Accordingly, the Mormon theatre is under the peculiar care of the high priest and his family, where his daughters act, and where, seated in a rocking-chair in the centre of the pit, he is to be seen surrounded by his elders and bishops, with their wives and children, laughing and clapping like boys at a pantomime. When he chooses to occupy his private box, one of his wives, "perhaps Eliza the Poetess, Harriet the Pale, or Amelia the Magnificent, rocks herself in his chair while laughing at the play." There are two private boxes at the side of the proscenium; one is reserved for the Prophet, the other is for the actresses on duty for the night, but not immediately engaged in the business on hand. The plays are short, the curtain rising at eight and coming down at about half-past ten; and, as the Mormons sup before going out, they do not allow their amusements to interfere with the labours of the coming day. The bell rings for breakfast at six o'clock, whether it was theatre night last night or no. As a Mormon never drinks spirits, and rarely smokes tobacco, the only dissipation of these hundreds of hearty playgoers is that of sucking peaches. Neither within the house nor about the doors is there any riot or confusion. No pickpockets, no ragged boys and girls, no drunken and blaspheming men. Hiram Clawson, the president of the playhouse, has made it as near like what he conceives a playhouse should be, as is possible. Behind the scenes are every comfort and convenience—light, space, cleanliness, delicacy; the green-room is a real drawing-room; the scene-painters have their proper studios; the dressers and decorators have immense magazines; each lady, however small her part in the play, has a dressing-room to herself. Among the actresses are three of Young's daughters; for "he does not think it right to ask any poor man's child to do anything which his own children would object to do." The first time that Mr. Dixon saw the Mormon prophet, pope, and king, was at the theatre, where the piece was Charles the Twelfth, and highly enjoyed by the audience. "Where Adam Brock warns his daughter Eudiga against military sparks, the whole pit of young ladies cracked off into girlish laughter, the reference being taken to Camp Douglas and the United States officers stationed there; many of

whom were in the house and heartily enjoyed the fun."

The interference of these United States officers and soldiers is a very sore point with the saints. "They cause us trouble," said Brigham Young; "they intrude into our affairs, and even into our families; we cannot stand such things, and when they are guilty we make them bite the dust."

In person Brigham Young is like a middle-class Englishman from a provincial town; with a large head, a broad fair face, blue eyes, light-brown hair, good nose, and merry mouth. He was plainly dressed in black, when Mr. Dixon saw him at the theatre; and he sat with his pale and pensive wife Amelia, who surveyed the audience through her opera-glass from behind the curtain of the box. This perfecting of the theatre before the raising of the temple is a type of the whole religious and secular life of the Mormons; and how, having so much religion in their blood and bones, they can afford to dispense on occasions with religious forms while attending to the service of things which cannot wait, and to the human needs which are imperative. Brigham Young's first exhortation to a troop of emigrants bore on these preferences. He bade them leave all care for their souls alone, and not to "bother themselves much" about their religious duties. "Your first duty," he said, "is to learn how to grow a cabbage, and, along with this cabbage, an onion, a tomato, a sweet potato; then how to feed a pig, to build a house, to plant a garden, to rear cattle, and to bake bread; in one word, your first duty is to live. The next duty, for those who, being Danes, French, and Swiss, cannot speak it now, is to learn English, the language of God, the language of the Book of Mormon, the language of the Latter Day Saints."

The most wonderful thing in this strange sect is the rapidity with which it has increased. Thirty-six years ago there were six Mormons in America, none in England nor the rest of Europe; to-day there are not less than two hundred thousand, twenty thousand of whom are in Salt Lake City, and a hundred and fifty thousand in the one hundred and six dependent settlements. In this space of time they have drilled an army more than twenty thousand strong, raised a priesthood, established a law, a theology, and a social science of their own profoundly hostile to all reigning colleges and creeds; all this in the face of the bitterest persecution. The old saying that the blood of the martyrs is the seed of the church has been exemplified in this case as in all others; and persecution, so far from stamping out Joe Smith and his half-dozen followers, has strengthened, raised, and consolidated them into a powerful nation and a formidable sect. It is a story as old as time.

The secular doctrines of the Mormons are chiefly: 1. The freedom of the church, which is open to all men of every clime, colour, and race, save the negro, as the descendant of Cain. 2. Toleration of differences in be-

lief and habits of life. 3. The actuality of a divine government in the church. 4. The services of God, being and including the enjoyment of life. 5. The nobility of work.

This last principle, that manual labour is good and noble in itself, has never been taken as a fundamental truth by any church. All through Christendom the gentleman is not the man who labours, but the man who enjoys the fruits of others' labours; and, in the Hindu ordering of society, the high-caste Brahmin deems work a curse, and the hewer of wood and drawer of water as far below the rank of gentleman as a dog is below a man. But with the saints work is righteousness; and to be a toiling and producing man is to be in a state of grace. Side by side with the nobility of work lies the righteousness of marriage with the Mormons; not only as expedient, not only as respectable, but as absolute holiness—celibacy being absolute sin. It is the will of God that men and women have to work out—"that is to say, all human beings have a function to discharge on earth—the function of providing tabernacles of the flesh for immortal spirits now waiting to be born." Mormonism is the most practical protest that has ever been made against those celibate bodies and institutions which hitherto have been regarded as especially sacred and pure. Captain Hooper, the representative of Utah in congress, has never been able to rise high in the church, because he is a steadfast monogamist. "We look on Hooper as only half a Mormon," said the apostle Taylor ("at which every one laughed in a sly peculiar way"), Taylor having three wives, while some have five, and others seven. As for Brigham Young, the women who are sealed to him as his nominal but not actual wives are almost countless; his actual wives are about twelve in number. The queen of all is the first wife, Mary Ann Angell, an aged lady, whose five children are now grown up; and perhaps the most distinguished is Eliza Snow, the poetess, and generally reputed Young's wife only in name. "About fifty years old, with silver hair, dark eyes, and noble aspect, simple in attire, calm, lady-like, and rather cold, Eliza is the exact reverse to any imaginary light of the harem." The Mormon rite of sealing a woman to a man implies other relations than our Gentile rite of marriage; it is only by a wide perversion of terms that the female saints who may be sealed to a man are called his wives. But the oddest form of sealing is that which unites the living with the dead, either by a proxy on earth or by direct, if shadowy, bondage with the grave.

The effect of this polygamous life on the bearing of the women themselves is by no means satisfactory. Saddened, secluded, taking but small part in the conversation even when they do appear, respectful to humility to the father or husband, deft and clever servants—but only servants—giving no sign by look or word that they feel themselves mistresses in their own houses, the wives of the Mormon are by no means living advertisements of the bless-

ings of polygamy. Many young girls will not marry. They prefer to remain single, and to work hard, rather than to live in comparative ease and leisure as the fourth or fifth wife of a Mormon bishop. Belinda Pratt holds to the man's doctrine that the women like it; and that the more loving the wife, the more eager she is to see her lord mated with a new spouse, even seeking out and courting for him such as she might consider likely to please. But no other Mormon woman would own to this, and every one to whom the question was put flushed out into denial, "though with that caged and broken courage which seems to characterise every Mormon wife." "Court a new wife for him!" said one lady; "no woman would do that, and no woman would submit to be courted by a woman!" "I believe it's right," said a rosy English girl who had been three years in Utah, "and I think it is good for those who like it; but it is not good for me, and I will not have it." Do the wives dislike it? she was asked. "Some don't, most do. They take it for their religion. I can't say any woman likes it. Some women live very comfortably together—not many; most have their tiffs and quarrels, though their husbands may never know of them. No woman likes to see a new wife come into the house."

The manner of living is still an open question in Utah, as to whether it is best to provide a separate home for each wife or to assemble them under one roof. Young sets the example of unity. A few old ladies who have been sealed to him for heaven live in cottages apart, but all his actual wives—the mothers of his children—dwell in one block close together, dine at one table, and join in the family prayers. On the other hand, Taylor the apostle keeps his families in separate orchards and cottages; each saint being left free to arrange his household as he thinks best, provided he keeps public peace.

"Women," said Young, "will be more easily saved than men. They have not sense enough to go wrong. Men have more knowledge and more power, therefore they can go more quickly and more certainly to hell." "The Mormon creed," adds Mr. Dixon, "appears to be that woman is not worth damnation. In the Mormon heaven men, on account of their sins, may stop short in the stage of angels; but women, whatever their offences, are all to become the wives of gods."

This, then, is the religion which the republican platform has pledged itself to crush. "We mean to put that business of the Mormons through," said a New England politician; "we have done a bigger job than that in the South, and we shall now fix up things in the Salt Lake city." The United States has a law against polygamy, and on that ground the anti-Mormons will take their stand, and enforce monogamy and morality at the point of the bayonet. Whether or not they will succeed, if they try, remains to be proved. Persecution has never yet destroyed a church; and when once polygamy becomes the seal of martyrdom, even such men as Captain Hooper and such women as the rosy-faced English girl will rush into it,

fascinated by its penalties, if not tempted by its pleasures. For the strength of Mormonism is in its religious fervour; and this is a power which nothing can crush. Right or wrong, the Mormon believes what he practises, and lives up to what he believes. His is no Sunday religion, taken out to be aired once a week, then laid aside as something unfit for the remaining six days: it is a religion of every day and every hour. But its doctrine of polygamy, in which now lies so much of its success as a social organisation, will eventually prove its ruin. In a country where there are seven hundred and thirty thousand men in excess of women, human nature will not bear the selfishness of the polygamist; and where, in certain other parts, men have to perform women's work because of the dearth of women, it cannot long be conceded that in other parts women should be reduced to the level of mere nurses and servants because of their excess. In some of the western regions, the disparity is such as strikes the moralist with awe; in California there are three men to every woman, in Washington four, in Nevada eight, in Colorado twenty, while in the whole mass of whites throughout the United States generally the disproportion is five in the hundred. What is hardly less strange than this large displacement of the sexes among the white population is the fact that it is not explained and corrected by any excess in the inferior types. There are more yellow men than yellow women, more red braves than red squaws. Only the negroes are of nearly equal number, a slight excess being counted on the female side.

"This demand for mates," writes Mr. Dixon, "who can never be supplied, not in one place only, but in every place alike (Utah alone excepted), affects the female mind with a variety of plagues; driving your sister into a thousand reckless agitations about her rights and powers; into debating woman's era in history, woman's place in creation, woman's mission in the family; into public hysteria, into table-rapping, into anti-wedlock societies, into theories about free-love, natural marriage, and artistic maternity; into anti-offspring resolutions, into sectarian polygamy, into free trade of the affections, into community of wives. Some part of this wild disturbance of the female mind, it may be urged, is due to the freedom and prosperity which women find in America as compared against what they enjoy in Europe; but this freedom, this prosperity, are in some degree at least, the consequence of that disparity in numbers which makes the hand of every young girl in the United States a positive prize." "I was very bad upon him, but I got over it in time, and then let him off," said a young and pretty woman of a favoured lover, whom afterwards she had rejected; and "in that phrase lay hidden," says Mr. Dixon, "like a password in a common saying, the cardinal secrets of American life, the scarcity of women in the matrimonial market, and the power of choosing and rejecting which that scarcity confers on a young and pretty woman."

The result is that a revolution is preparing in America—a reform of thought and of society—a change in the relations of man to woman which is not unlikely to write the story of its progress on every aspect of domestic life. The revolutionists and reformers are the women themselves. They are in a manner the dominant party, and mistresses of the situation. They care nothing for men's jests and gibes, but demand absolute equality of the sexes as a divine law and a human right; and repudiate as a shameful sin the absorption of the wife in the husband, and his power over her, as has been ever the rule throughout all Christendom—in greater extent than in the East.

Of the remaining sects and communities which Mr. Dixon mentions, none are more curious and unnatural than the Shakers of Mount Lebanon. Here, in direct opposition to Mormonism, celibacy is the rule of life and the acted law of God; and, with celibacy, the most skilful care of the soil, the most perfect order, temperance, frugality, worship, spiritual seerism, cleanliness, and wholesome life. But no love, no maternity, no marriage. Yet there is a peculiar preference and a certain spiritual selection among the brothers and sisters, which, though it may not be called love in the Gentile sense, is something as near akin to it as any of the United Society of Believers in Christ's Second Appearance may indulge. The Eldress Antoinette, with whom Mr. Dixon lodged, told him, "in the presence of four or five men, that she felt towards Frederick, her co-ruler of the house, a special and peculiar love, not as towards the man, and in the Gentile way, as she had heard of the world's doing in such matters, but as towards the child of grace, and agent of the Heavenly Father." She told him, also, that she had sweet and tender passages of love with many who were gone out of sight—the beings whom we should call the dead—and that these passages of the spirit were of the same kind as those she enjoyed with Frederick.

In the Shaker houses the ladies sleep two in a room; the men have separate rooms; the ladies have looking-glasses, but are warned against vanity. "Females," says Elder Frederick, "need to be steadied some." They are free in the matter of colour and material for dress, but they are strictly confined to shape; they eat in silence, thrice in the day—at six in the morning, at noon, and at six in the evening—rallying to the sound of a bell, and filing into the eating-room in a single line—women to one end, men to the other. After a silent prayer on their knees, they help themselves and each other as they list, without compliments or thanks; and they are strict vegetarians. They are active in work—no man suffered to be an idler, not even under the pretence of study, thought, or contemplation; they believe in variety of labour as a source of pleasure, and pleasure is the portion meted out by an indulgent Father to his saints; and their farms, their schools, their scents, and all their other industries, are acknowledged to be the best in the United

States. Their church is based on these ideas: the kingdom of God has come; Christ has actually appeared on earth; the personal rule of God has been restored. The old law is abolished; the command to multiply has ceased; Adam's sin has been atoned; the intercourse between heaven and earth has been restored; the curse is taken away from labour; the earth and all that is on it will be redeemed; angels and spirits have become, as of old, the familiars and ministers of men. No Shaker marries, and no Shaker dies. The soul simply withdraws and leaves the body, which is now as a worn-out garment; but the spirit is as living and present to seeresses like Sister Antoinette as when it animated its earthly tabernacle. Antoinette and those like to her are never alone. Shut up in the visible solitudes of their own chambers, they hear, see, and converse with their departed friends as distinctly as if all were still in the body. So indeed do other denominations, springing out of diseased imagination, with more show of truth and earnestness than ever belonged to the impostures of Home, the Davenport, and their congeners.

Amongst the spiritualists of a doubtful sort are the Dentonists, as they may be called—the order of Female Seers, who, by pressing a stone, a shell, a weed to their foreheads, pretend to read off, as from an open book, all the natural history connected therewith. They call this gift psychometry. They, or rather their offspring, the followers of Eliza Farnham, are the great champions of woman's superiority over the baser male sex; which is a step in advance of woman's rights. There was a time, they say, when men were like hairy monkeys; but even then the women were superior, in that they were less hairy and more erect. One of the apostles of the sect, Helene Marie Weber, is a practical farmer, and takes her produce to market dressed like a man, in boots, "pants," and buttons. Her every-day garb is a coat and trousers of black cloth; her evening dress is a dark blue coat with gilt buttons, buff cashmere vest richly trimmed with gilt buttons, and drab trousers.

Then there are the Tunkers, or Harmless People, whose chief principle is that of fraternal love, and who marry among themselves under a kind of protest, and with the feeling that celibacy is holiness, and marriage, if not a crime, yet is akin to it. There are also the Bible Communists or Perfectionists at Oneida Creek, the rule of whose life is pantogamy, about which not much need be said, save that they have established their community on religious principles, which are briefly these: (1.) reconciliation with God; (2.) salvation from sin; (3.) brotherhood of man and woman; (4.) community of labour and its fruits. John Humphrey Noyes, the founder of the sect, a tall pale man, with sandy hair and beard, grey dreamy eyes, good mouth, white temple, and a noble forehead, says that all other communistic institutions have failed, because they were not founded on Bible truth; they began at the

third and fourth stages; they left God out of their tale, and they came to nothing. The Perfectionists live on the principle of holiness, each brother and sister doing as he likes; but there is a counter-check to this in the principle of Sympathy, akin to that which public opinion holds with us. Thus, a brother may do as he likes, but he is trained to do everything in sympathy with the general wish. If the public judgment is against him, he is wrong, the family being supposed to be always wiser than the unit. If he wants anything for himself—a new hat, a holiday, a damsel's smiles—he must consult with one of the elders and see how the brotherhood feels on the subject of his wish. If against him, he must retire. Until this doctrine of sympathy was introduced, the community of Perfect Saints had little of what the world would call success.

The great trade at Oneida Creek is in traps. Brother Newhouse, an old trapper who settled down to machine work at Oneida Creek, took the matter in hand, and made a trap which made the family. In a single year they cleared eighty thousand dollars of profit by these traps, and even now their yearly revenue is about three thousand pounds, English money. The advanced saints are vegetarians, the weaker still indulge in flesh; they drink no wine, nor beer, unless it be a dose of either cherry wine or gooseberry wine taken as a cordial. "I tasted three or four kinds of this home-made wine," says Mr. Dixon, "and agree with Brother Noyes that his people will be better without such drinks."

These are the more salient points of Mr. Dixon's book, but by no means the only passages of mark. On the contrary, the whole narrative is full of interest from end to end, as well as of most important subjects for consideration. No student of society, no historian of humanity, should be without it, as a reliable and valuable text-book on New America.

MUSIC ABOUT MUSIC.

IN TWO CHAPTERS. CHAPTER I.

ART, as a theme for works of art, is not the easiest possible subject to handle. Novels, in which poets and novelists figure too prominently, are apt to be sickly and uninteresting. Alfred de Vigny's "Chatterton," though supported by the passionate acting of Madame Dorval, was more painful than popular as a drama. The rule, with some small exceptions, may be applied to plays about actors—not forgetting "Tiridate," "Sullivan," and even "Adrienne Lecouvreur," written to exhibit Rachel's wondrous dramatic power in a new phase.

Then, as to pictures, who could name one, in which a painter is the hero, that bears a universal, incontestable reputation as a first-class work of art? Raphael and the Fornarina—the Monarch picking up the Artist's pencil (to name but two subjects)—how often and again have these and other well-worn persons

and anecdotes been put on the canvas, and by hands anything rather than feeble, and yet with the result which has been already stated in the question!

One of the most agreeable examples tending in a contrary direction that we can call to mind, is Mr. Marcus Stone's picture of Greuse the Prodigy, detected in illicit drawing, exhibited a year or two ago at the Royal Academy.

But when we come to Music, the aspect of matters entirely changes. That peculiar incarnation of imagination and invention in art, howsoever closely connected in near relationship with Poetry, Painting, with even Architecture (which Goethe called "a frozen music"), in right of its working out its purposes by aid of a science of numbers, proportions, symmetry, has always lived, moved, and had its being under conditions bearing no analogy to those under which its kinsfolk may be said to have flourished. This assertion will not be palatable to system-mongers, but it is susceptible of proof, as a brief notice of some of the music, of which Music has been the theme, will display and illustrate.

It is noticeable that one of the first—if not the first—of operas, of which distinct record is extant—Monteverde's "Orfeo"—is based on the lovely antique legend, setting forth "Music's power." The ears that this distinguished Italian moved by his concords and discords can have had little in common with those of our time. The rude, hideous paintings of Margharitone are hardly further from the finished masterpieces of the Italian school than are the naked, dreary chants of one who, in his day, was a deep thinker and a prescient discoverer from anything which now passes as melody, or even as dramatic expression. Since Monteverde's day the legend has been again and again treated by poets and composers of every stature; but, with the exception of Haydn's incomplete opera, only once treated so as to live. We, of course, allude to Gluck's music, imperishable, for the most part, if the epithet can be applied to any work of art. It was only the other day that this simplest of operas, and the oldest to boot which keeps the stage, drew all Paris—habituated as is the public of that city to the strongest sensations, to crowds, to mysteries, to complications of construction, each one attempting to surpass its predecessor—to tremble and to weep beneath the spell of truth and genius. It is true that Gluck's music, written originally for Guadagni, a male *contralto*, and afterwards altered for M. Legros, one of the high nasal French tenors, of which the race is, unhappily, not yet extinct, had never before such a perfect exponent as it found in the sister of Malibran—the accomplished and impassioned Madame Viardot. Art on the musical stage can go no further, and rise no higher, than in her impersonation. Who that saw her will ever forget her absorbing sorrow at the tomb of Eurydice, the rapture which burst into every feature, animated every fibre of her frame, and thrilled in every tone of her

voice, when she was permitted to hope that the beloved one might still be rescued back to life—the pleading grace, blent with indomitable resolution, with which she cleft her way among the grim wardens of Death's prison-house, subduing them by the charm of song—the anxious, eager, questioning step with which she went to and fro among the spirits of the Elysian fields—the inexpressible triumph of the moment of recognition, with its celestial music, when her hand closed on the well-known hand of the wife so bitterly mourned, so courageously sought—the desperate after-conflict and despair, when hope was all but wrecked by her disobedience of the condition of ransom? Taking every circumstance and difficulty into account, it may be truly said that there has been no such personation on the opera stage in our time—not forgetting nor undervaluing the Medea, the Semiramis, the Romeo, of Queen Pasta.

A strange fate has attended this "Orphée," as also Gluck's four other grand operas, on which it is worth while to dwell for a moment. His music might have been born into the world to breed controversies. If it have given such an impetus to the sung drama as no other operas have done, it has been an object of more grudging praise, more cavilling objection, more fierce invective than any body of music which could be named. To this day there are persons, conceiving themselves competent judges and sincere lovers of art, who are tormented with a desire to drag the king of antique opera from his throne. They cannot admire Mozart enough, and therefore they cannot admire Gluck too little; as if there was not room in the world for both! Because of the absence of certain technical qualities, which make the composer of "Don Juan" a faultless model of symmetry, because Mozart commanded a more affluent stream of melody, they will not admit that in the highest tragedy Gluck holds the stage with a firm grasp, such as no one else has put forth. Compare his classical dramas with any that have succeeded them, and these (Cherubini's "Medea" excepted) will be found to shrink and dwindle into a mediocrity and weariness; whereas Gluck's bear no more traces of age than do the Apollo, the Laocoon, the Niobe of antique sculpture. It is idle to reject them because they are less available for concert purposes than Mozart's operas. Calculated for the theatre, they are imperishable, because they demand the highest dramatic art, and satisfy the most exacting dramatic sense. And the injustice is all the more flagrant because of the large debt owing to Gluck by Mozart. The cemetery scene in "Don Juan" would not have been written had there been no oracle in "Alceste,"—and in "Orphée" (to come home from a digression) that the first air, "Objet de mon amour," with its three-bar phrases and its cast of melody, contains the germ of Susanna's "Deh vieni non tardar," can be denied by no one that studies the strange intricate questions of coincidence and reminiscence in Music. The specks on "Orphée"

are easily to be counted. They are to be found in the song of Love, in the first act, in the too long-drawn duet of husband and wife, which precedes the terrible explosion of sorrow in the last scene. Not one of the least singular features of this unique opera is the adoption by Gluck, both for Italy and France, severe in speech as he was in denouncing singers and their varieties, of the *bravura* by Berton, from his "Orfeo," an opera which had its little day of success, which the Italian master wrote for the exhibition of Guadagni's execution. But in spite of all Gluck's confessions of rigid doctrine (why will people write prefaces to their plays, laying down laws they are themselves the first to break?), no one can have been much more neglectful and disorderly in regard to works, produced not without painful thought, than this mighty man. The state of his scores, as M. Berlioz (an authority on the subject) assures us, is deplorable. He allowed the intercalation of the part of Hercules, in "Alceste," with Gossec's music—an excrescence suppressed the other day when that opera was revived in Paris. The great men of his time, however—Handel being another more signal example of licence—were too great to be scrupulous. But Haydn and Beethoven are perhaps the only voluminous musical composers who did not owe large obligations to the wares of other men.

Handel's name must have come next to Gluck's on the list as the greatest of musicians who has taken Music as his theme, even had it not been accidentally introduced by way of illustration. He might have been born into the world of art to disprove an assertion which, however specious, is a random one (at least as concerns music), that no production written with a temporary, otherwise an immediate purpose, can have permanent value. His "Coronation" and Funeral Anthems (the latter thrown off in a few hours, but which set the pattern to Mozart's "Requiem"), his Dettingen and Utrecht Te Deums, belie this assumption; and yet more, his "Judas Maccabeus"—which, like Gluck's forgotten opera, "La Caduta dei Giganti," was written in hot haste, to turn to account the advantage of the Duke of Cumberland's victory over the Pretender;—and yet most, his "Alexander's Feast," produced for one of those Cecilian celebrations of the Saint's Day, which during a protracted series of years figured among the entertainments of the City companies of London. So rich now as these guilds are, it may be fairly asked, why has the good old tradition of the accommodation they extended on moderate line to poets and musicians in former days, when they were poorer, and England was narrower in its sympathies for imaginative display and creation than now, been allowed so completely to sink into the ground?—to be merged in the commission of costly overgrown dinners, good only for gormandisers and cooks, and of gold and silver dishes, in the device of which the expenditure of money is as great as the expenditure of taste is small?

But "let that pass" (as Beau Tibbs hath it),

the matter in hand being Handel's music on the subject of Music. Nothing in all the list of orchestral compositions, devoted to the glorification of our Art, approaches in completeness, splendour, and dramatic variety his re-setting of Dryden's "Alexander's Feast," originally written for Clark. But what words were those he set! Dryden's felicity, clearness, variety of rhythm and sonority as a writer for music (some touches of the false taste of his time allowed for) cannot be better appreciated than by comparing this lyric with the opera contrived by a greater dramatist than he, on which also Handel exercised his genius—Congreve's "Semele." The pathos, vigour, brilliancy of the musician's share in the work are amazing, the date of its birth considered. The specification of four numbers—"He sang Darius," "The many rend the skies" (with its masterly use of a ground bass), "Revenge," and "Thais led the way"—is hardly needed. A more incomparable union of melody, dramatic fire, and deep expression than they display could not be cited. It is obvious that Handel was carried out of himself further than usual by "glorious John's" poem. In hardly any other of his works that could be named, is there so much audacity in point of key and compass as in this. Yet the audacity nowhere amounts to that strain on the powers of the executants, which, if permissible, is unwise, as substituting in the interpreter anxiety to get through his task for that freedom without which there can be no real individual (withal reverential) interpretation.

Compared with "Alexander's Feast," Handel's "Ode for St. Cecilia's Day" wants strength and spontaneity—keeping in this matter a strict ratio with the merit of the poem. In this Dryden too largely got over his ground by the aid of technical conceits,—as in lines like these:

The diapason closing full in man, . . .
Sharp violins proclaim
Their jealous pangs and desperation, &c.

The best number is the elaborate air, with *violoncello obbligato*—

What passion cannot music raise and quell?

The March is vigorous, even among Handel's marches (a group of tunes well worth studying by those who care for pomp and motion in music). The final chorus, "As from the power of sacred lays," is interesting as a proof of what has been elsewhere asserted, that the great master almost always produced his great effects twice.—The antiphony of single unsupported voice and chorus, however, is nobler, because less forced, in Miriam's incomparable Chant of Triumph, with which "Israel in Egypt" closes. The winding up of the Cecilian chorus, however, contains one of its maker's most gigantic effects of climax.

Concerning Cecilian odes, for a long time a yearly good custom in London, the reader may be referred to the interesting monograph on the subject, some years ago, published by Mr. Husk, librarian to the Sacred Harmonic Society.

Enough to say that they engaged the attention of our best artists, poetical and musical. Addison, Congreve, Pope (the last unfortunate in his colleague, William Walond), did their best in contribution to the ceremonials held in honour of Music's Saint, and Purcell, Blow, Eccles, and Wesley set them; but our musicians have borne no proportion in variety and vigour to our poets, and Handel's two compositions are the only ones that survive or are even recollected. An attempt, "with a difference," to revive the interest in the Saint, was the other day made by Mr. Benedict, in his "Legend," produced at the Norwich Festival.—The last scene of this is, musically, an inspiration.

These Cecilian odes were not Handel's only tribute to "Music's power." The ample library of his compositions contains nothing finer than what may be called the concert scene in "Solomon," where the divers moods of the art were set by the wisest of kings before his guest, the subtlest and most superb of queens.—Another instance of a versatility, for which he has never been sufficiently credited, can be proved in Handel's music about the music of birds. There has always been more or less a fancy, since executive facility developed itself, to write *bravura* airs on this theme. Hundreds could be found in the earlier Italian operas; but none live save three. Handel threw off many, each different from the others, but only two survive—"Hush, ye pretty warbling choir," from "Acis and Galatea," with its deliciously fantastic accompaniment, and "Sweet bird," from "St. Penseroso," in which the dialogue of voice and instrument might have been inspired by Crashaw's fantasy of "the lutanist and the nightingale," with a prescience that one day Madame Lind Goldschmidt would sing it.—The spirit and charm of these can hardly be better appreciated than by comparing them with the third bird-song which lives, that in Haydn's "Creation," which, though younger in date, and more ambitious in its attempt at variety, and, like all that Haydn wrote, exquisitely finished, is comparatively faded and conventional.

Let us pass at once to another composition of music about Music, which long enjoyed a certain popularity, especially in Germany, Andreas Romberg's "Lay of the Bell." Here, like Handel before him, the composer had the rare advantage of collaborating with a real poet. Not even "Alexander's Feast" is richer in pictures than Schiller's splendid lyric. But it fell into the hands of a second-rate, howbeit correct, writer. Andreas Romberg was trained in a good time. Science and taste were not in his country scouted as obsolete, when he wrote, neither was Beauty avoided as insipid, inexpressive, and cloying in its feebleness. His was a time, too, when discovery had by no means exhausted all rational combinations; when there were more fancy-lands for Fancy to conquer than now exist—so many have been ravaged by newer imaginative composers.—Romberg, however, wrought without a spark of genius; at best his

music can but be rated as a weak reflexion of that of Haydn and Mozart; nowhere inelegant, nowhere ill-made, showing, throughout, a due sense of the situations to be treated, but mediocre. Time has not so much wrinkled it, as made it effete, by discharging its colour, and disclosing its inherent want of individuality and vigour. It must perish, together with a mass of respectable writing, which it cost honest men years of labour to produce; which public, less satiated than ours, have applauded. Why should not some one, following the fashion of Handel, set this ode again?—It would have been a goodly task for Mendelssohn, who was notoriously not averse to the idea of celebrating sound in Music. Among his papers, after his decease, was found a copy of Wordsworth's noble ode, "The Power of Sound," which was under his consideration as a theme for a *Cantata*, at the moment when Death's premature arrest suspended his labours.

FLINT JACK.

It may be questioned whether Hudibras was quite correct in stating,

And sure the pleasure is as great
In being cheated as to cheat.

Undoubtedly being well cheated is a pleasant sensation, so long as it lasts; but Providence has gifted us with only a limited allowance of gullibility. When that is exhausted, cheats, adieu! Yet they are never afraid to begin again after a check that would make honest men timid and shamefaced to all futurity. Cheating is long, though life is short. We therefore conclude that

The pleasure, sure, is not so great
Of being cheated as to cheat.

Such, probably, is the opinion of a hero who's exploits have been recently made known to fame. How he has chuckled at having taken in the very elect of antiquaries!—at finding that a Roman urn (calcined bones, earth, and all) which a canny sceptic had refused to accept for five shillings was afterwards bought up for three pounds—at having included on his list of dupes the curator of the British Museum!

Some doubt has been expressed as to the native place of this real personage:—for the reader will please to understand that Flint Jack is no imaginary creation, but a simple and substantial fact. Edward Simpson, alias John Wilson, alias Snake Billy, alias Flint Jack, the Prince of Counterfeiters, is spoken of and written about, throughout all England, as an indigenous phenomenon given to the world by Sleights, Whitby, in cunning Yorkshire. But is there any evidence, besides his own, that he is a native of that parish or its neighbourhood? His accent is not Yorkshire; and, twenty years ago, he was called Cockney Bill. A like cloud hangs over some of his places of residence. He once appeared before the Scarborough magistrates, but escaped imprison-

ment on the plea of being a geologist and well known to Mr. John Leekonby, his letters to whom were always signed "John Wilson," and were generally written from Burlington, where there resided a veritable John Wilson, an honest dealer in fossils.

Counterfeits and counterfeit antiques have been known to the world in every age. Mr. John Evans, F.R.S., has exposed the manufacture of all kinds of antiquities, in a lecture before the Royal Institution. The same subject has been followed up by Mr. Samuel Sharp. A tendency to dishonesty, for the sake of gain, has been the characteristic of every age; and the modern example of whom we are writing is no unworthy representative of his class—with the distinctive difference that the rogues of old forged moneys almost wholly, while Flint Jack (though he has not shrunk from the fabrication of *old* coins) has mainly devoted his time and talents to the formation and vending of spurious manuscripts, gems, pottery, bronzes, ornaments, seals, rings, &c.—with special attention to monastic seals, Roman and Saxon fibulæ, the so-called "coal money," stone hatchets and hammers, flint arrows and spears, bronze celts, jet buttons and armlets, and, most remarkable of all, fossils, and those so admirably executed that there are few scientific men who have not been constrained, at some time or other, to confess themselves "done" by that arrant rogue, Flint Jack.

Edward Simpson was born in 1815, of humble parents, his father being a sailor. In his youth he appears to have been tame and manageable, like many other wild animals, whose real nature does not show itself until they have attained their adult stage. At the age of fourteen, he entered the service of Dr. Young, the late historian of Whitby, an ardent geologist. Edward, his constant attendant in fossil-hunting expeditions, acquired thus in five years the rudiments of geology, more particularly of the Yorkshire coast. He left Dr. Young to serve Dr. Ripley, also of Whitby, with whom he remained six years; but his second master's death threw Edward out of employment, and from that time to this he has lived loose from all trammels.

From this time he began to acquire his various aliases. We hear no more of Edward Simpson. The active and more than ordinarily intelligent young fellow, who has hitherto borne that name, becomes Fossil Willy on the Yorkshire coast; Bones, at Whitby; Shirtless in the Eastern Counties; the Old Antiquarian, in Wilts and Dorset; and Flint Jack, universally.

After the death of Dr. Ripley, Fossil Willy took to a roving life, for some months rambling about the neighbourhood of Whitby, gathering specimens, for which he found a ready sale amongst the local dealers. In 1841 he began to extend his walks to Scarborough, and there got to know two gentlemen with whom he had dealings in fossils. After including Filey and Bridlington in his exploring expeditions, he became very "handy" in cleaning fossils, in which he took as much interest as in their discovery.

He was, consequently, tolerably well off in the world, and made tramping a really profitable pursuit; for he never wasted money on any conveyance, unless when he had a river or the sea to cross.

In 1843, his taste for geology was suddenly perverted by his returning to Whitby, and there being shown the first British barbed arrow-head he had ever seen. The Tempter, in some plausible human shape, inquired if he could imitate it. He said he would try. The spark had been applied to the train of gunpowder; and from that time his life of roguery began. He was henceforth Flint Jack to the backbone. But the flint arrow-head was Jack's ruin. The fine workmanship which all genuine arrows show, and the beautiful regularity of their form, sorely puzzled him. He made many a failure in his endeavour to copy the original. At last a mere accident showed him how to chip flint, and also revealed the proper tools. Jack, however, has never yet succeeded in discovering the mode of surface-chipping; that, he says, is a barbarous art which has died with the flint-using people, the Britons. He has exhausted his ingenuity, and tried every form of tool to effect this object, without success. Hence, his forgeries in flint are now easy of detection.

Jack was musing one morning on the weakness of connoisseurs and the means by which the Britons had chipped *their* flints, when, heedlessly taking out the hasp of a gate which was hanging loosely in its fastenings, he struck a blow, without any purpose, with the curved part of the iron on a piece of flint. To his great astonishment, off flew a fine flake; so Jack, in delight, tried again. The second blow was even more fortunate than the first; the long wished-for secret was discovered! By practice he acquired the knack of striking off any sort of flakes he needed. He afterwards declared, with pride, that he could at that time make, *and sell*, fifty flint arrow-heads per day. Thenceforth dates that extraordinary supply, to collectors and museums, of forged flint weapons—the causes of many a warm discussion of great annoyance, and of much mirth. The ring or curve of the gate-hasp did it all.

For heavy work, Jack has supplemented this with a small round-faced hammer of soft iron (not steel); and for light work, about the points and barbs of arrows, the pressure of a common bradawl is all he requires. In place of the round-faced hammer, a water-worn pebble of any hard stone picked up on the beach is sometimes used—is, in fact, more effective for striking off flakes of flint, and is only not used generally on account of its weight. Jack's pockets were often too heavily laden to add the weight of a boulder-hammer to the raw material which they already contained—the flint nodules out of which he manufactured stone hammers, hatchets, hand-celts, pounders, and adzes, to his heart's content.

There now came over him a strong desire to study antiquities in general; and, by visiting museums, and obtaining access to private col-

lections, he quickly familiarised himself with the forms and materials of urns, beads, fibule, seals, &c.; and to the fabrication of all kinds of antiques he boldly set to work. The line of life upon which Jack was now entering necessitated the strictest secrecy: to have had a confederate or confidant would have risked the ruin of all his plans. He was obliged to deny himself the consolations of friendship and the sweets of love. He spent long years without a companion; unknown, except to those whom he invariably duped at their first acquaintance; avoiding all contact with "travellers" of less ability, for Jack *is* a man of ability; and, as a wanderer and an outcast, he is promising to end his days.

Accordingly, at the beginning of 1844, we find Jack at Bridlington, fairly astart in imposture. In this locality, *genuine* British flints are obtainable in the fields in surprising quantities, and these Jack would sometimes pick up—they were useful in leavening with a grain of truth a whole bushful of impudent falsehoods—but he chiefly dealt in spurious flints of his own working. Here he got introduced to a resident antiquary, for whom—if his own statement be reliable—he made a collection, six hundred in number, and of course all warranted genuine, if need be. At this period, so active was he in prosecuting his trade, that he ordinarily walked thirty or forty miles a day, vending his wares and collecting materials. In the Wold country, garden rockworks are even yet enriched by specimens of ancient stone implements—all the handiwork of clever Flint Jack.

The year 1844 was waning, when Jack conceived the bright idea of adding to his trade the manufacture of British and Roman urns. His first pottery was made on the Bridlington clay. This was an ancient British urn, which he sold as genuine, asserting it to have been found somewhere in the neighbourhood. For a time, the urn-making business proved the best. But this new branch of trade necessitated even still more secrecy and still greater knavery. Jack betook himself to the cliffs, where he set up an ancient pottery of his own. Here, after modelling the urns, he placed them beneath the shelter of an overhanging ledge of rock, out of the reach of rain, but free to the winds, until dry. Then came the bakings. These were only required to be rude and partly effective; the roots, grass, and brambles afforded the "fire-holding," and with them he completed the manufacture of his antiques.

Jack, however, finding the clay cliff of Bridlington Bay much too open and exposed, repaired to the thickly wooded and solitary region about Stainton Dale, between Whitby and Scarborough; where he built himself a hut near Raven's Hall, and used to spend a week at the time there engaged in the making of urns and stone implements. After a general "baking-day," he would set off, either to Whitby or Scarborough, to dispose of his "collections"—all of which he solemnly declared had been found in (and taken by stealth from) tumuli (pronounced

by him *toomoolo*) on the moors; his great field of discovery being the wild wastes between Kirby Moorside and Stokesley, where he declares a man might pass a month without meeting another human being. Delightful solitude! He was monarch of all he surveyed; the fear of detection was reduced to a minimum—and the general knowledge of antiquities of the British period was then but small. The urns were all sold, without incurring the least suspicion. "*Now*" (1866), he says, "they would be detected at once;" being not only too thick in the walls, but altogether of wrong material, ornament, shape, and burning. "I often laugh," says Jack, "at the recollection of the things I used to sell in those days!" The force of boastful and swaggering roguery can scarcely go much further than this. Which of the two enjoyed the greater pleasure—Jack Flint, the cheat, or his clients, the cheated?

At Pickering, Jack got acquainted with Mr. Kendall (a gentleman much occupied with archaeological matters), who showed him a collection of flints purchased as genuine. Of course they were of Jack's make. On being asked for his opinion, in a moment of weakness he frankly declared that he knew where they came from. He even set to work to show the method of manufacture, initiating his patron into the mysteries of forming "barbs," "hand-celts," and "hammers." Jack states, in apology and explanation of his erring for an instant into the ways of honest men, that Mr. Kendall's kindness overcame him, and that he resolved, for once, to speak the truth. He did it, and had no occasion for regret. He exposed the forgery, and retained a friend to whom he could look for a trifle when "hard up."

At Malton he found out the only antiquary in the place, and immediately set to work to deceive him. But he also found there a rival (a barber) in the fabrication of ancient urns. Therefore, as the hatchet was least understood, he sold the antiquary one, formed out of a piece of ironstone, without the fraud being at the time detected. This hatchet was alleged to have been found at Snainton, where Jack said he had stopped to help some people who were taking up potatoes in a field near the church. While digging there he had found the relic, and had refused to sell it to the landlord of the inn, preferring to dispose of it at Malton. This, if true, was a bad speculation, for he sold it for a shilling only. The hatchet was a very clever forgery indeed. In order to come at its real history, inquiries were subsequently made at Snainton; and it was found that, near the church, there was no tillage land at all. Hence suspicions of the implement's genuineness. It is now in the collection of Doctor Rooke, of Scarborough, and would deceive the majority of antiquaries at the present day.

On another visit, Jack played a still bolder game, and succeeded. In Pickering he found an old tea-tray, and out of this "valuable" he set to work to fashion a piece of ancient armour. His first idea was a shield, but the "boss"

bothering him with an insuperable difficulty; it was abandoned for a Roman breastplate (pectorale), which was constructed forthwith. This was a remarkably successful effort. Jack made it to fit himself, adapting it neatly to his own arms and neck, with holes for thong-lacings over the shoulders and round the waist. After finishing it, he walked into Malton, wearing the "armour" under his coat. On arrival he had an "ancient" piece of armour for sale, found near the encampments at Cawthorne; and a purchaser was again found, whose suspicions had not yet been excited. The "relic" is now at Scarborough.

About this time Jack heard of the discovery of a Roman milestone. The idea was new. He therefore set to work to make one, taking care to render the inscription as puzzling as possible. The stone he found on the roadside near Bridlington. The mock milestone was duly produced and sold, and, according to Jack's statement, is now in the British Museum.

Of this milestone story we have another version. The locality of Bridlington is named as that where Jack found the flat slab, and, after his rough lettering, grinding, and chipping, he buried the stone in a field for subsequent discovery and disinterment, which farce was solemnly carried out. First of all, a lad wheeled the exhumed stone in a barrow to Bridlington; but as the bait did not get taken quite so quickly as Jack desired, he set off with his treasure-trove to Scarborough, where the Bridlington antiquaries were represented as wanting judgment, thereby losing a prize. One of Jack's patrons in the medical profession is alleged to have given five pounds for the stone, and that it is *not* now in the British Museum, as Jack fancies it is, but that the buyer presented it to the Museum of the Royal College of Surgeons. The milestone trick is regarded as one of Jack's most famous exploits.

During this same period of his career, he undertook the manufacture of seals, inscribed stones, &c. Of the latter, he professed to have found one in the stream of the Pickering marshes. In passing the railway gate-house there, he went to the stream to drink, and in so doing, noticed a dark stone at the bottom of the beck. This he took out, and found it had letters on it: "IMP CONSTAN EBUR" round the Christian symbol. Jack being then but little known, no suspicion of a forgery was entertained. In course of time, this stone was submitted to Mr. Roach Smith, Mr. Newton, of the British Museum, and other antiquaries, but no conclusion could be arrived at, its form suggesting most, if anything, the ornate top of the shaft of a banner. But the ability of the Romans in working metal made it unlikely that they should use so rude a stone ornament for such a purpose, so *that* theory was obliged to be rejected. The article still remained a puzzle; it is now considered a curiosity. Its parentage was afterwards discovered; having been duly traced to Flint Jack's hands.

There is a tide in the affairs of men. Jack's

tide was turned, appropriately, by too much liquor. In 1846, a change came over him. He continued to be the same arrant rogue; but, in addition, he began to indulge in the dangerous delights of intemperance. "In this year," he says, "I took to drinking; the worst job yet. Till then, I was always possessed of five pounds. I have since been in utter poverty, and frequently in great misery and want."

Jack seemed to have been "led away" at Scarborough. If he was, it only served him right; for he did not, at that place, reform his practice of leading other people wrong. While there, he got introduced to the manager of one of the banks, but he says he could not "do" him; for he bought no flints, and only cared for fossils. Jack had not yet set about forging fossils, as he afterwards found it expedient to do. While at Scarborough, however, he made and disposed of a "flint comb." This article was a puzzle to most people, and the purchaser submitted it to Mr. Bateman, who could not find any use for it, except that it might have been the instrument by which tattooing of the body was effected.

At the end of that year, Flint Jack visited Hull, where, being short of money—he had been "always short of money since he took to drinking"—he went to the Mechanics' Institute, and sold them a large stone celt (trap), represented to have been *found* on the Yorkshire wolds. The imposture was not detected. But Hull proved a barren place; and, not being able to find out any antiquaries or geologists, Jack crossed the Humber, and walked to Lincoln. Here he called upon the curator of the museum, and sold him a few flints and fossils, the flints being forgeries. As this was the only sale he was able to effect, he set off for Newark, and there found out the only geologist in the place, who was making a collection of fossils. Jack remained there a week, collecting and making fossils and working flints, his patron supposing that all, both fossils and flints, were genuine.

The fossil-forging business was being pushed on now; it was so much more convenient to make a fossil than to look for it. Jack answered curious inquirers by stating that the flints were all picked up on the high lands in the county, and he was always careful to particularise the neighbourhood of camps, entrenchments, &c., the positions of which he learned by reading local histories; and he invariably visited the sites in person. As for the fossils, he, knowing the different strata, found them where the open quarries were, and, if not findable, they were always makable. Rarely, therefore, if ever, was he at a loss.

And so he went on and on, sinking deeper and deeper in the mire of rascality; sometimes, in his wanderings, reaching places where there were no antiquaries to take in, sometimes stumbling upon collectors whose names he has forgotten now, having probably good reasons of his own for remembering to forget them. At Cambridge the chalk and

green sand enabled him to lead a jolly life. Through the curator of the Geological Museum and an optician, who dealt in fossils and antiquities, he managed to drive a roaring trade. His sides shook with laughter while relating the tricks he played upon a learned professor there. In the neighbourhood of Yarmouth, he made the acquaintance of an "archæological parson, easy to do." At the remembrance of his visits to this "easy" divine, Jack indulged in immoderate mirth, pronouncing him, however, to be "of a good sort, and a right liberal fellow." He had got to that degree of insolence in which, while despising his dupes, he could dole out to them a sort of contemptuously compassionate praise. The clergyman showed his antiquities freely, and gave an unlimited order to collect specimens of Roman or British implements. Jack immediately set to work with a will, and soon produced a valuable assortment, delighting his patron with forms quite unique—the invention of his own fertile brain. The Yarmouth gains soon melted in the beer-pot, and then Tramp, Tramp, Tramp, with empty pockets.

At Colchester he fell in with a travelling Jew, who collected paintings, china, furniture, or any other antique article for the London dealers. Jack said this man was no blockhead; but Jack cheated him nevertheless. Jack's antiquities delighted the son of Israel, who never suspected their origin, and who was incautious enough to mention the marts in London where he could dispose of them. This was precisely what Jack wanted, for to London he had resolved to go. He took in his Hebrew customer deeply, making him many things. The Jew at length became aware of their spurious nature, but was far from cutting the acquaintance in consequence; on the contrary, he subsequently bought his productions regularly.

In London he got introduced to Mr. Tenant, of the Strand—a step which turned out to be the beginning of the end. On him he called to dispose, at first, of fossils only, but afterwards sold flints and other antiquities. On being asked, later on, "Did you take them in at the British Museum?" Jack replied, "Why, of course I did!" And again, "They have lots of my things, and good things they are, too."

For twelve months Jack honoured London with his presence, manufacturing, chiefly flints, all the while, and obtaining his supplies of raw material by taking boat to the chalk at Woolwich. At length the dealers (and the museums too) becoming overcharged with flints, Jack feared their very plentifulness might arouse suspicion. He therefore resolved upon a return to Yorkshire, but cunningly took a different route, directing his "walks" through Bedford and Northampton, where he found three ready dupes.

"Here," says Jack, "I did best of any."

For all, he made large collections of flints, "spicing" them sometimes with a few genuine fossils. At Nottingham he found two anti-

quaries, and duped both. There, by way of "a rest from the cares and anxieties of business," he took a "holiday," to visit the battle-ground of Wallerby Field (Charles I. and Cromwell).

At York he became known to the then curator of the museum, and regretted greatly he had no flints to "do" him with. All his stock in trade had been left at Nottingham, and the intermediate country had yielded no flint. The curator furnished him with money to go to Bridlington, and collect chalk fossils and shells, which he did, and supplied to the York Museum. He remained on the coast about twelve months, attending wholly to fossils, and appearing to have a final chance of lapsing at last into an honest life.

An unfortunate walk to North Shields one day brought him to the beach, where he found flint among the shingle. The temptation was irresistible. Jack set to work on the spot to make forged celts. With a spurious collection he went to Durham, and there resumed his former trade, selling a few as genuine (with a plausible history attached) to private individuals who "took an interest in antiquities."

After another replenish on the Yorkshire coast, Jack conceived the idea of visiting Ireland, thinking that his English beats would well bear "rest." He accordingly started on his Irish walk, heavily laden with antiquities for the sons of Erin. He says he *did well*—saw all the best things in the north of the island, traversing it entirely on foot, highly delighted with the scenery. Sometimes he collected fossils, sometimes he made a few flints. He had much rather manufacture them than pick up genuine ones for sale; "gathering them was such a trouble." From Dublin he returned, via Liverpool, to York, aiming for the coast, in search of flint. Although he "did well" in Ireland, improvident habits soon exhausted his cash, and he reached his store of wealth, the coast, in a state of utter indigence.

After a twelve months' sober fit, he fell a "longing to see other parts of England." At Bottesford, in the Vale of Belvoir, he found a great open quarry of lias, yielding numerous fossils. This was a grand prize; and he stopped here some time, working the quarry to a large extent. The first basketful he got there he sent to a clergyman of Peterborough—a sort of recognition of past kindnesses, which Jack was not backward in according, and perhaps the only redeeming trait in his character. But he soon atoned for this virtuous weakness. At St. Alban's he found a good customer, to whom he sold spurious flint-knives, arrow-heads, and "drills." The cleverest trick was providing an ancient silver coin to order, out of the handle of a German silver teaspoon.

At Devizes (where he sold both fossils and forged flints to the museum), Jack was deemed so remarkable a being that he was solicited to sit for his first portrait. His cartes accordingly were freely sold as photographs of "The Old Antiquarian."

At the close of 1859, Jack returned to Lou-

don, and was at once charged by Mr. Tennant with the manufacture of both stone and flint implements; but that gentleman promised to introduce Jack at the meetings of the Geological and Archæological Societies, if he would expose the method of manufacturing flints. Jack consented. He prepared some rough flint implements, and had everything ready for astonishing the natives at an evening meeting, to which he was taken in a cab (a wonderful event in his life) by Mr. Tennant. Here, on the platform, he finished the rough flints, and fashioned them into his best shapes for arrows, &c., and also exhibited his mode of obtaining flakes from blocks of flint, and finally showed genuine and spurious flints in contrast.

Mr. Tennant lectured that evening on Jack's rogues, and the members were surprised how easily and simply the weapons were made. They could not help laughing at one another, on recollecting the way in which they had been duped. They asked Jack how he discovered the method himself; which he explained, showing his implements, of which the memorable gate-hasp near Whitby had been the parent.

In 1861, Jack found the news of his forgeries spread throughout the land. All collectors began to fancy their treasured flints were spurious. He found his occupation as a deceiver almost gone; but still kept wandering about, continuing to manufacture flints and call upon old acquaintances, whom he generally found forgiving, and as ready to purchase "dooplicates" as they were while supposing them genuine. The rest of Jack's life is soon told. In 1863 he again visited Wilts, where (at Salisbury) he was introduced upon the platform of a learned society, and again photographed.

As a proof of Jack's skill as a craftsman, one long-suffering collector (who, after being repeatedly done, still submitted to be done again) possesses a stone hatchet, which is so remarkably like a genuine one, that, its history being lost, he is unable to determine whether it is of Jack's manufacture or that of the ancient Britons.

For the above biographical details we are indebted to the Malton Messenger, whose proprietor the sturdy impostor had imposed on. It is therefore a study from the life, and not a fancy portrait, as the extravagance of its features might cause it to be supposed. Flint Jack's present position is miserable; and it would be strange if it were otherwise. Among antiquaries he can generally raise a trifle for pressing needs—a proof of their placable disposition; but, when possessed of a little cash, he drinks without ceasing, until it is gone.

It has lately become the rule for archæologists to hang in their sanctum a portrait of Jack framed in his own flints, and the fashion has given him a better demand for his wares. Not

long since he started on a trip through Westmoreland and Cumberland, heavily laden. He was hard up at starting, and had to part with a first-rate "dooplicate," of a hammer-head for one shilling, declaring he had not made one for the last six years, and that it was worth at least five shillings. "Genuine ones," said Jack, "are not to be obtained; and the discussions of the learned, at all the Institutions, are over hammers and celts of my make!"

He is still anxious to learn, and is much in want of a pattern of the so-called "tool-stone." Which of our readers will gratify his laudable wish? By inadvertence, a gentleman mentioned one, which is in the possession of the proprietor of the Malton Messenger, and Jack went to Malton to inspect it. Being refused, he became highly indignant, and vowed "never to call at Malton again."

On hearing of a likely customer, he will beat about the bush to find out what tack to sail upon. "Will he know me? Will he suspect me? Has he heard of me?" are his queries. If all seems plain-sailing, Jack is yet competent to pass off his flints as genuine; if known beforehand, he at once offers them as "dooplicates," relying on the skill shown in their formation for reward. If asked if he has been at — lately, where he played off a particular dodge, Jack will reply, "'Tis over soon yet; he won't bear doing again for some time!"

But what a waste of ability! What might not this man have done for science had he only taken the same pains in assisting as he did in leading it astray! What advantages he might have ensured for himself; what intellectual gratification he might have procured for others! As it is, his antiquarian lore, his accurate topographical knowledge, are wasted on the occupants of the trampers' lodging-house or the beer-house kitchen. But, in truth, the absence of all moral feeling, the insensibility to shame, the unconsciousness which he displayed of the existence of such a thing as personal honour, make one suspect that he is scarcely responsible for his actions. A grain of gratitude seems to be the only pure morsel in the composition of this perverted character.

Very shortly after the conclusion of "BLACK SHEEP,"

A NEW SERIAL STORY,

BY THE AUTHOR OF

AUNT MARGARET'S TROUBLE,

Will be commenced in these pages, and continued from week to week until completed.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS'S READINGS.

MR. CHARLES DICKENS will read at Dublin on the 15th, 18th, and 22nd; at Belfast on the 20th of March; and at St. James's Hall on Tuesday the 26th of March.

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